THE UNSPEAKABLE OATH

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU · ISSUE FOURTEEN/FIFTEEN · TWELVE DOLLARS

THESE FOLK WERE NOT BEAUTIFUL IN THEIR SINS...SO THAT THEY

THE UNS PEAKAB LEOATH

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CAME TO USE LESS AND LESS TASTE IN WHAT THEY CONCEALED

THE DREAD PAGE OF AZATHOTH

In David Lynch's new film *Lost Highway*, the main character states, "I like to remember things my own way. How *I* remember them. Not necessarily the way they happened." H.P. Lovecraft wrote that from childhood, he saw time as his special enemy, and that his art lay in the defeat of time.

Recently, a dear friend of mine and I spent several days doing little else but talking. Much of our conversation consisted of memories, childhood and up. I soon found that there was a substantial no-man's-land of memory in my mind, an entire set of experiences that I cannot pinpoint save that I know they had not happened in the time that I was a small child, and that they had already happened by the time I was nearing adulthood. They are a vast soup of recollections, sloshing about in a container demarcated roughly by the ages of ten and fifteen. What, precisely, was I doing in those years? Which grade of school was I in when such-and-such happened? The anecdotes have remained, but the temporal firmament in which they first sprouted has eroded, leaving only the anecdote hanging in a void of uncertainty. These experiences have ceased to be memories; they are simply stories.

Reading through S.T. Joshi's terrific biography *H.P. Lovecaft: A Life*, I was struck by how meticulously Joshi has reconstructed the near-entirety of a man's existence (in a review of the book, Joyce Carol Oates referred to Joshi's work as being an almost day-by-day reconstruction in effect if not in fact). Could anyone, even myself, assemble a work as complete about my own life? That is, are there enough collateral sources, enough footprints in the sand, for such a thing to be created? Lovecraft was a special case; a relentless letter-writer, he is perhaps the best self-documented personage of our century. What about the rest of us? Where do the memories of our lives fall, and who is there to catch them?

Several times I have dreamed something, and then awoken and believed it to be true. Sometimes it has been hours, or even days, before I realize that this recent experience was illusory. Several years ago I dreamed that there was an assassination attempt on Mikhail Gorbachev, but that the attempt only succeeded in killing his wife, Raisa. The following day, I kept checking the news to hear more about this tragedy; it was only as evening came on that I finally asked someone else about it and realized that it was something I had dreamed. When memories can only persist as stories, stories can become memories—and now this story-turned-memory is a story once more, an anecdote I retell to explain myself.

There are things I remember because I can call up the memory plainly. There are things I remember because they have become stories, and I remember the stories after the original experiences have faded. There are things I remember secondhand, things that happened to me but that I have forgotten and know only because someone has told me of them since. There are things that I remember as experiences but suspect of being dreams, or flights of fancy, or perhaps even experiences or stories absorbed from others and made my own. During Ronald Reagan's term as President, a graduate student's thesis splashily revealed that several of Reagan's oft-repeated anecdotes about his life were in fact scenes from movies he once appeared in, which he had over time confused with reality and mistaken for events he had lived through.

As my life staggers tirelessly on, I feel less and less connected to the events of my past, even my recent past. Lately I've fallen into the embarrassing habit of using the GenCon convention as a mile marker: another year, another GenCon. Was I dating so-and-so before the GenCon before last? Or was it after? I have to backtrack, GenCon by GenCon, to settle in my mind precisely when events of even the last three years took place. When my relatives get together and reminesce, the result is arbitration: everyone remembers those shared experiences a different way, and the story-telling becomes a negotiated process in which all must be satisfied that a story happened *just so* before we can move on to the ice cream and cake.

Lovecraft saw his art as the defeat of time, the avoidance of modernity and the selective embrace of the past. I agree with him in the principle if not in the specifics. We cannot trust our brains to be truthful to us about our memories. We must resort to error-ridden anecdotes instead, and in so doing we defeat time in our own way. It is the only way we know how to live.

—John Tynes, editor-in-chief

SCREAM AND

I have just read another excellent issue of TUO, and I feel compelled to comment on some items which appeared in the article "Thirteen." In discussion of the number twelve in counting, the author neglected to mention that twelve is also the numerical base (as opposed to ten, for decimal counting) in Germanic languages. We have names for the numbers up to twelve and then use a new system for the numbers' names: in English: nine, ten, eleven, twelve; thirteen (three + ten), fourteen (four + ten), etc. It works the same in German. A baker's dozen is not so called because the bakers were selling in bulk and were afraid to use the number thirteen. The baker was not really selling you thirteen loaves; he was selling twelve. The medieval bakers' guilds strictly regulated how heavy a loaf of bread should be and there were heavy fines for selling underweight bread. Throwing in an extra loaf assured that the dozen would not be underweight.

I have never heard of the particular meaning of "blue moon" given in the article (to the Egyptians, the thirteenth moon in the year). The meaning I am familiar with is the second new moon in a given month (which also explains its connotation as something that does not occur very often, whereas there are always thirteen moons in a year).

Finally, saying that the word triskaidekaphobia comes from the Greek "triskaidekaphobes" tells us nothing at all. We would have been better served by a break-up of the word into its roots: triskaideka (thirteen) and phobos (fear). If these criticisms sound unduly harsh, I apologize, but they detracted from the otherwise entertaining article.

Janice Sellers **via internet**

After finishing TUO13, I have some comments, and a tale, to relate. First, in the second handout of "Hands of the Living God," there has been an error: toward the end of the second paragraph, there are several references to "Mr. Phelps and his sons", which according to logic (the sinister Mr. Phelp being already dead), should refer to "Mr. Black and his sons."

Second, I missed the "Case of Mark Edward Morrison" and the "Paranoia Files." Any chance of seeing them back in future issues?

And now, the tale. It relates to John Goodrich's excellent "From Beyond." A year ago, one of the characters in my group was Father Jeremiah, played by Shai. The good father was a former Irish rebel, turned priest after being sickened by the atrocities of that struggle, some of which he himself committed. After surviving a Boston campaign of my own concoction, Jeremiah (after reading *De Vermiis Mysteriis* and other texts belonging to cultists) and his friends went on the *Orient Express* campaign.

He was the only original character to reach the final scene of the campaign. The rest of the players had lost two, and in one instance, four, characters. He was the glue keeping the campaign together. He was, of course, changed: he was near insanity when the group reached London, and scarred. He had also acquired far too much Mythos knowledge, and kept dreaming about Nyarlathotep.

Now, Shai was very proud and very fond of that character. He even had an oil painting of Father Jeremiah commissioned. This posed a problem for me. As veteran players of *Horror on the Orient Express* will recall, there is an opportunity for one character to be eradicated through a simple act late in the campaign. Jeremiah was the appropriate one to take this action when it came up, though he had no idea of the result. As he did so, I did something I never had before: I asked him whether he was sure he wanted to do this. He replied in the affirmative, and before his unbelieving eyes, the dice spelled the end of Jeremiah.

Shai was furious. He refused to accept that a character could be killed so easily, especially a character into which he has invested so much. He refused to speak with me for several days, and when we next met he called me a murderer. But, in the end, he has accepted my logic: that in an uncaring and hostile universe, the life of investigators depend on the whim of luck. I wish to thank Mr. Goodrich for putting this view in such an articulate way in his article.

Yossi Gurvitz **Petah-Tikva, Israel**

Letters to *The Unspeakable Oath* are welcomed from readers and lunatics alike, by email or post office. They will usually be edited for brevity and clarity prior to publication. See the inside back cover for our address.

SCREAM AGAIN

[You're right. The last two references in "Hands of the Living God" to "Phelps" should be to "Black" instead. Argh. As for the two columns, they won't be returning to these pages for the foreseeable future. They were both quite good, but I wanted to free up more room in each issue for new material rather than being tied to a lot of recurring columns. And as for the unsavory Mister Goodrich, his commentary on how the Keeper should serve as the channel for the uncaring universe is among my favorite pieces that we've published in TUO.]

Recently, whilst visiting relatives, I noticed a certain magazine in which my degenerate nephew had become engrossed. As an antique dealer, the cover—representing my very interests—struck me at once, but immediately I noted not only the questionable title of the item, *The Unspeakable Oath*, but also the ridiculous intimation of some giant squid in the boutique. Still, against my better judgment, and in the spirit of keeping an open mind (the irrepressible credo of the modern age, it would seem) I proceeded to peruse the dreadful contents of the periodical.

I now have a clearer understanding as to the regrettable influences that have made the lowest dregs of an already morally wayward society what they are. Imagine my horror upon discovering that this entire magazine was clearly and unabashedly devoted to the instruction of violence and discourse with Satan's children! Inside, I found directions on how to cultivate your own demonic idols, the advocation of "The Gentle Art of Slaughtering," and the most nauseating illustrations better confined to the office of the forensic doctor. Truly this is the culmination of the most evilly deranged minds! I was so taken aback that I knew it rested in my hands to make the call to salvation. Action must be taken!

Have you not the smallest mote of decency between you, Mr Appleton, Crowe, Detwiller and Tynes? Can you not see the imperative necessity of keeping this basest of filth from the eyes and minds of the innocent? I cannot fathom the idea that you are all simply ignorant of the fact that such depiction of "Blood and Guts" is a blatant affront to your moral obligation towards the betterment of all mankind, and yet you go ahead with your sinful depravity. For shame! At a time when magazine covers beg the public worship of crazed lunatics like M. Manson, and revel in the promiscuous circulation that the finest fashions use little or no material at all in their clothing, we must depend on fewer and fewer media sources to provide the seemingly outdated idea of wholesomeness, and it is publications like yours that represent the opposite pole—the definitive model for us to avoid! It is dependent on concerned citizens like myself to ensure that there remain defined boundaries of good taste, and that they are not exceeded by such a degree that turning back is impossible.

Although I am certain you will not print my letter, I would nevertheless make a plea to your readers: There is still time! Rebuke the vileness of the malignant *Unspeakable Oath*. Embrace light, not *this* darkness. I will take it upon myself to ensure that each one of you is given the chance to experience the joy of reputable, proper reading material like *The New Yorker* and *Reader's Digest*. Your parents may have given up on you, but some of us still care!

Mr. Owen E. Worm **Vancouver, Canada**

[Representatives of The New Yorker *and* Reader's Digest *could not be reached for comment.]*

THE EYE OF LIGHT

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Items reviewed are rated on a scale of 1–10:
1–3: *Not worth purchasing.*
4–6: *An average item with notable flaws.*
7–10: *Degrees of excellence.*

Clean, Shaven

starring Peter Greene, Robert Albert, Megan Owen
produced, written & directed by Lodge H. Kerrigan
reviewed by John Tynes

Call of Cthulhu deals explicitly with insanity, but most players have had little if any direct experience with severe states of mental imbalance. *Clean, Shaven* presents the tale of a man suffering from schizophrenia, and it's a heck of a tale that should help any Keeper or player roleplay the loss of one's mind.

Peter Winter has been away for a while, though whether he was incarcerated or simply off wandering is not clearly stated. He returns to his hometown in an effort to find his young daughter, whom he hasn't seen since she was an infant. The guy seems to believe that he has a radio receiver in his head and a transmitter in his finger, which cause him to constantly hear a jumble of radio signals, voices, and static. He's also strangely obsessed with his appearance; he can't stand the sight of mirrors or reflections, and when he steals a car the first thing he does is smash out the driver and passenger windows and tape newspaper over the mirrors and back-seat side windows. Yet he also is rigorous in keeping himself clean and shaven—the scenes of him shaving without a mirror are bloody and hard to watch, as is the scene when he takes a knife to his fingernails. (When I saw it in the theater, several audience members audibly gasped and covered their faces during the latter sequence.)

One memorable scene occurs when Peter is in a library, looking for clues to his daughter's whereabouts. While looking at stacks of magazines, he has a crazed flashback to a peculiar encounter from his past. He begins banging his head against the magazines, writhing in frustration, while we see glimpses of what he's remembering, accompanied by the strange radio-static buzz that follows him everywhere. His reaction to the memory is unusual, but we understand what it is that's causing him to flake out. Suddenly, we see him from a distance, with the other library patrons staring, and the flashbacks and buzz drop out—he's just a crazy guy in a public place banging his head on some magazines for no apparent reason. The dichotomy between the schizophrenic world he dwells in and the mundane world of those around him is cast in sharp relief.

As Peter travels, young girls are being murdered. Is he responsible? A detective pursuing him thinks so—but the detective has peculiarities of his own. He

AND DARKNESS

seduces the foster mother of Peter's daughter, and is clearly dealing with some personal demons, too.

Peter's attempts to deal with the world around him are sad, but he's never entirely sympathetic...just alien. The audience is left in a state of ambiguity about the man and his actions, and we are never allowed to just see him as a poor, misunderstood individual as he'd no doubt be portrayed on some TV movie of the week. He always remains just beyond our grasp.

Movies such as *The Silence of the Lambs* and *SE7EN* give us a look at insanity once removed; we see the crazed individuals from the perspective of cops and innocent people looking in from outside. In *Clean, Shaven* we get right inside the lunatic's head—and still are left with more questions than answers. Also unlike those commercial (but excellent) movies, *Clean, Shaven* is not a visually stylish film, nor is it dramatically paced. It moves forward slowly but steadily, with an almost documentary feel. It is occasionally horrific, but never really tense or exciting. The story simply unfolds before us, and the best we can do is squirm.

This low-budget independent film received little distribution, but is available in video stores. *Call of Cthulhu* fans should find it a revealing look at insanity, and particularly useful in portraying how 'insane' actions can seem rational to those committing them. Peter Greene is stunningly good in the main role (*Pulp Fiction* fans will recognize him as the actor who played the rapist motocycle-cop Zed), and the very last scene is devastating. I can't think of a flaw in the film, and gladly rate it 10 phobias.

Tremors 2: Aftershocks
starring Fred Ward, Helen Shaver & Michael Gross
written by Brent Maddock & S.S. Wilson
directed by S.S. Wilson
reviewed by John Tynes

Fans of the chthonians could not possibly have missed 1989's *Tremors*, a low-budget action/horror/comedy about giant worm-like things that tunnel through the ground and eat people (hmm). If you like chthonians and haven't seen *Tremors*—which was a thoroughly well-made and enjoyable flick well worth anyone's time—you really should rush to your video store and give it a spin. It's darn good, and funny as heck.

Those of you who have seen the original film may be aware—or not—that there is a sequel, released to video last year. *Tremors 2: Aftershocks* comes from some of the same creators as the original, and features the return of actors Fred Ward and Michael Gross reprising their roles.

Most movie sequels, let alone most b-movie sequels, are bad. *Tremors 2*, I am astonished and thrilled to say, is quite good. It's every bit as good as the original, lacking only the freshness that the first movie had by virtue of being, well, the first movie. If you liked *Tremors*, burrow down to your video store and check this one out.

What's the story? Our heroes, having won the attention of the national media by slaying those awful critters the first time around, are now living lives of quiet desperation. (Kevin Bacon, who appeared in the first movie, does not appear this time around.) Their spouses have left them, they're poor as ever, and they didn't receive any royalties from the video game based on their exploits. Suckers.

But a Mexican oil company is having a lot of deaths near its drilling rigs, and those crazy "graboids" (chthonians) are to blame. The company hires the pair to come down and solve the problem.

They do, of course, and cleverly. Ward's novel method for killing the critters is bound to be used by *Cthulhu Now* investigators facing a chthonian threat. Gross' big-guns approach is also valid, to a point.

The film is a delight through and through. Numerous difficult situations are set up plausibly and with excitement, and the characters get through each problem with brain power instead of brute force. The writing is funny and engaging throughout, and the performances are spot-on. The story may be formula through and through, but the formula is far better-crafted here than in the vast majority of movies. The special effects are also excellent, particularly the computer graphics effects by Phil Tippett's team.

There's really nothing wrong with this movie. It's pure popcorn-crunching enjoyment from start to finish, and it's a very worthy sequel to the original. I didn't expect that it would be any good at all, but the creators of *Tremors* have returned and showed that they really know what they're doing and love it.

Tremors 2: Aftershocks never received theatrical release in America, but it's in video stores nationwide. Give it a shot, and be amazed: this is a sequel as clever and enjoyable as the original. 10 phobias.

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FROM BEYOND

Losing Sanity
by Steve Hatherley

Organising the *Convulsion '94* gaming tournament was, for most of the time, a whole heap of fun. Perhaps the worst bit was actually writing the damn scenario itself. However, figuring that nobody would be publishing this two-part epic, I let everything hang much looser than I would were I writing for, say, Pagan Publishing. Statistics were thrown out the window (I hate writing them—and none of the Keepers complained, or even commented!), useless comments were bandied about and I took a lazy attitude to anything that bored me. Amid this heresy, I left in the Sanity losses for the assorted grisly events that peppered the adventure. You know the sort of thing: "Her head explodes in a bloody pulp of brains, bone and hair—lose 1/1D6 SAN." It feels so natural: part of the language that is *Call of Cthulhu*.

Anyway, I had not paid much attention to these (as when I run a game I tend to throw SAN out with everything else) until one of the playtesters commented that the SAN losses for the scenario were rather extreme. Apparently one investigator finished the adventure with a single-figure SAN score, which pleased me to no end. But yes, I saw the problem—I wanted the investigators to finish the tournament, after all, rather than being mustered out early on.

So I trimmed the SAN losses by a few points here and there, enough to make the tournament playable, but it set me thinking about the viability of the whole Sanity mechanic. I have already admitted that I rarely use it—but why?

According to the rules, a character's Sanity represents his mental strength. The lower his Sanity, the more unstable he is. That's fine in theory, but unfortunately, that's all it is: a theory. The reality of the SAN roll is that it gets in the way. It gets in the way of a good story, and it gets in the way of the atmosphere. It doesn't really represent mental strength because, except when you need to make a SAN roll, it doesn't actually do anything.

Instead, all Sanity does is provide Keepers with another way of incapacitating investigators. Great Cthulhu need not be the gross, invulnerable entity it is made out to be: that 1D10/1D100 SAN loss is sufficient to keep it alive almost indefinitely.

This has lead to CoC becoming known as "the game where everyone dies or goes insane." While some notoriety is good for a horror game, in this case it is more of a curse than a blessing for several reasons.

First, it deters new players. I'm not talking about people new to RPGs (who, fortunately, can often be suckered into playing), but those with just enough knowledge to be put off. Other games put the players into heroic roles where "winning" means getting all the glory. As we all know, CoC does not work like that. Unfortunately, the fact that there is a specific mechanic to drive investigators insane puts some people off.

Second, going insane ruins play. Temporary insanity is bad enough, but permanent insanity is no better than character death. In cold, hard terms a failed SAN roll means that a player is excluded from the game—just when it gets interesting. It means the introduction of another new character, in campaigns where character turnover may also be considered too high. This is an extreme result for a couple of rolls of the dice, a factor that the player has almost no control over.

However, the worst flaw with the Sanity rules (and this really is a cardinal sin) is that they spoil the horror of the moment. Just when things are getting exciting, when the putrescent mass of rotting flesh lurches from the shadows to rip the policeman's head from his shoulders, we are supposed to stop and check the investigators' Sanity. The players are torn from the evocative description, the scene, and the atmosphere and instead their attention turns toward the dice and character sheets. A few minutes later, a few Sanity points less and the action resumes. But—the moment has been lost. The horror, which the keeper has spent the last twenty minutes building up to, has been wasted. The players' attention has been diverted by a clunky mechanic, reminding them they are only playing a game.

As Sandy Petersen wrote in the *Convulsion '94* program book, "THE HORROR'S THE THING" (his capitals). Nothing in CoC is more important than horror. Remaining faithful to Lovecraft, having accurate weapon statistics, an accurately detailed back-

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This is an opinion column, open to anyone who wants to write on matters concerned with *Call of Cthulhu* and the Cthulhu Mythos. Opinions expressed are those of the writer, not the publisher.

ground: these are all second to scaring the shit out of the players. And, as nice as the Sanity rules appear on paper, they really do manage to screw up any attempt at horror.

Things proceed from bad to worse if any of the investigators actually fail a Sanity check. The table of insanities and phobias appears, and we are inevitably treated to a display of comedy roleplaying quite inappropriate to the situation. Yes, a properly played insanity is a wonderful sight, but in my experience it leads to exaggeration and silliness. I do not even like the list in the rulebook, as it only results in Keepers choosing a random insanity rather than considering the situation and choosing a carefully-tailored derangement.

The point of this is that a random roll of the dice results in an equally random insanity—and a complete lack of feeling. Players cannot be asked to roleplay an insanity for which they have no sympathy.

Call of Cthulhu is an old game. Born in 1981, it survives through to 1997 and beyond pretty much unchanged. Five editions have added a bit of polish and spit, but the basic mechanics today are thirteen years old. And therein lies a problem. Thirteen years may not sound like much, but roleplaying games have progressed considerably since then. Back in 1981, we were still learning how to play. Mechanics like Sanity were fine back then, when we needed guidance and advice on how to behave. But not now. We're older, wiser, and we have the benefit of playing the newer games.

As a result, we are better players and Keepers. Even new players are better, because today's rules are well-written and full of advice. We don't need clunky mechanics to tell us how to roleplay. We do not need to force random SAN rolls, because we can tell when the players are scared shitless. Players will roleplay the effects of failing a Sanity check without prompting. I've seen them flinch, shudder and panic in the face of the Cthulhu Mythos. Why do we need a damn mechanic when the players do it naturally anyway?

And if I want to inflict a phobia, or insanity, I can tailor it to the situation. I don't need to give it a clinical name; I just tell the player that his character has a problem. I can then work that problem into the game: the player reacts because he remembers the situation that caused it. Surely this is better than a random mechanic working independent of the player's reactions?

The Sanity roll is yesterday's mechanic. It should be taken out into the yard, shot, and boiled down to make glue. It was born of a time when we were less confident of our roleplaying, and did not trust players. Well, times have changed and it is time that the rules changed with them. Goodbye, and good riddance.

TALES OF TERROR

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MYSTERIOUS MANUSCRIPTS

The Lord of the Yellow Sign

by Brian M. Sammons

A screenplay by Ralph W. Routhgate. **Language**: English, Latin **Cthulhu Mythos**: +5
Sanity: lD4/lD8 **Spell Multiplier**: xl **Study Time**: 1 month **Printing**: Unique Copy, 1919
Spells: Contact Hastur, Contact Hastur, Unspeakable Promise

This diabolical work was spawned from the fertile mind of writer/director Ralph W. Routhgate in the year 1919. It was to be his third and most ambitious movie, but it never completed production. A horrible tragedy happened before the film's end which left Routhgate and most of the cast and crew dead. The bizarre event is still as much a mystery today as it was the night it happened. This is due to the many conflicting stories from the few survivors of that grisly night. What is known is at best gossip, rumor, or half-truths.

Routhgate was a visionary, well ahead of his time. He won both praise and criticism for his first two dark and moody films—*He Without Name* and *Behold the Dark*—which set the fledgling film industry on its ear. Critics of the cinema opposed one another on the subject of Routhgate: he was either a superb master of the macabre, or a tasteless fool with a deranged mind. Either way, when word spread that Routhgate was to start filming his third and most personal work, the new stars of the silver screen were knocking at his door. In typical Routhgate fashion, he turned them all down, deciding instead to cast unknown actors for all the leads. In his own words, "I will not overshadow the power of this story with a lot of big names. To do so would be an unforgivable sin."

Continued on p. 11

A TALE OF TERROR

Dead...and Buried?

by Brian M. Sammons

One of the investigators receives a telephone call with the disturbing news that her younger cousin, Ronald, has recently passed away. It seems that Ronald was the victim of a tragic auto accident: he lost control of his vehicle and ran it into a tree while driving late one night. The investigator's aunt invites her and her friends to attend the services at Myers Funeral Home in two days' time.

The funeral is a dreadful thing. There is much crying and sobbing, with poor Ronald's mother nearly hysterical. Before the services are begun, there is a commotion in the front hall of the funeral home, as a man in a long trench coat and dark glasses is escorted out. To make matters worse, it is a closed-coffin funeral—Ronald's face was badly damaged in the accident.

At the end of the eulogy, the mourners line up to make a procession past the closed coffin and pay their last respects. As the investigator's grief-stricken aunt approaches the coffin, she collapses on top of it in a heap of sobs. It takes two large men to pull her away, and in the ensuing commotion the coffin is toppled over. The lid is knocked open from the impact and everyone can see that there is no body in the coffin, only bricks. This causes the aunt to faint and many mourners to shriek, and the investigators must find out what has happened to Ronald's body.

Possibilities

1. Myers is a greedy old man and has found a new way of making money for himself. He conducts closed-coffin services as much as possible, often making up baseless excuses as to why the lid should be closed. He weighs the casket down with bricks and rocks, then he doesn't even bury the coffin. He has four such coffins that he continually reuses. However, his real money comes from the use of the body. Recently, he has begun selling the corpses to the local university for their medical programs and experiments. In fact, the man who was escorted out of the funeral home that day was the man responsible for acquiring the cadavers for the school, who came an hour early by mistake.

If Myers feels that the investigators are getting too close to the truth then he will hire some local thick-necked thugs to try and scare the investigators away. If the truth looks like it will be reveled, old Mr. Myers will hang himself rather then face the shame and guilt of his crimes.

2. Myers is a wizard of the dark arts and has made allies with a pack of ghouls that live in his cemetery. As part of his pact he often gives them the fresh corpses of anyone unfortunate enough to have a closed-casket service. He did this with young Ronald's body. When the investigators start nosing around, he will sick his pack of eight ghouls on them. If that fails, he will raise three zombies from the unburied dead in his receiving vault. If all else fails, he might attempt to summon something up to kill the investigators, or simply flee.

3. Young Ronald had gotten mixed up in some very bad business. For the last couple months he has been working for a foreign family of morphine smugglers as their delivery boy.

After his friend (who was also in the business) was killed by the family for being a little short on a delivery, Ronald wanted to get out. With no possibility of just walking away, he faked his own death. He paid the local coroner to fake the death report, and paid old Mr. Myers to bury an empty coffin. In fact, it was a curious Ronald, in disguise, that was escorted out of his own funeral by an over-cautious Mr. Myers.

If the investigators look like they might uncover his secret, Ronald will come forward and ask for their help. He would like for his mother and himself to be able to leave town as quietly as possible. This might be the solution to the problem, but the morphine smugglers have also heard of the empty coffin and are now looking for revenge.

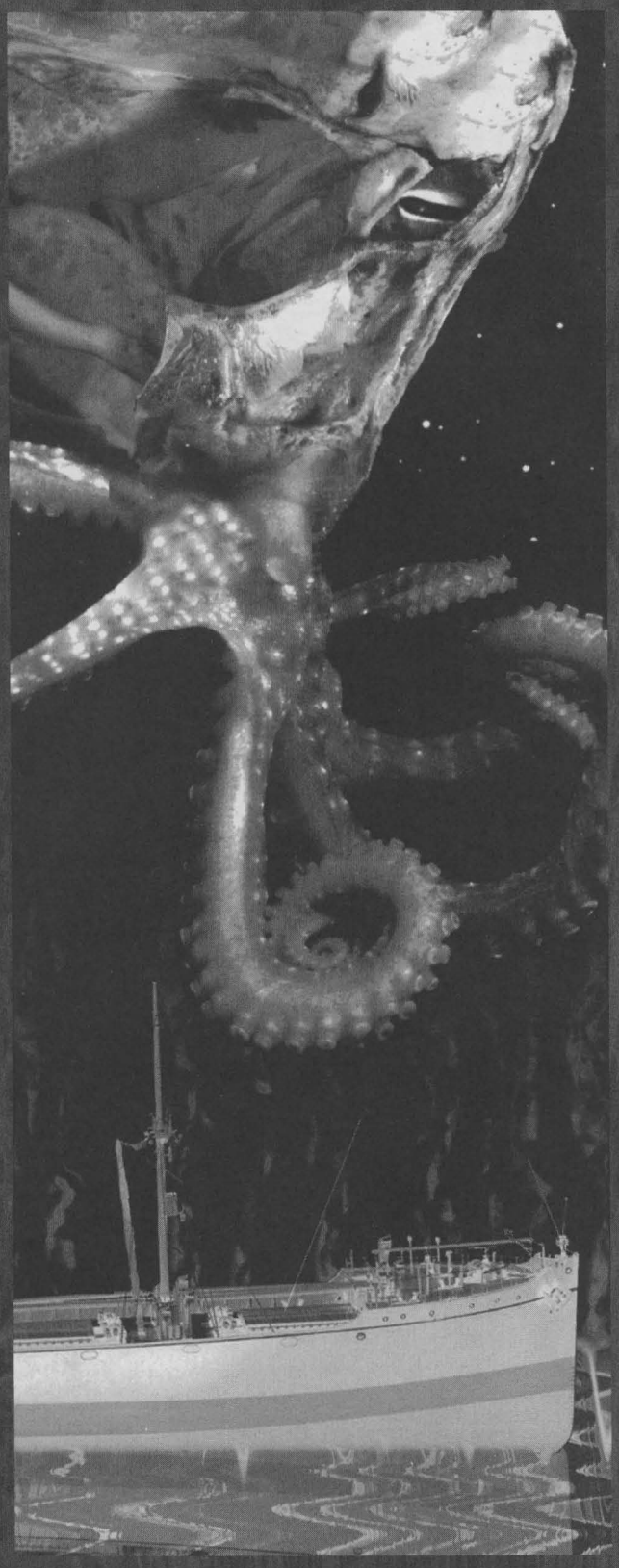
A *Tale of Terror* is a short scenario premise, with three different possibilities for what's really going on. Keepers can mine them for ideas, taking that which appeals and discarding that which does not.

A TALE OF TERROR

Oily Grave
by Brian Appleton

On the eve of April 4, 193_, the oil freighter S.S. *Valenzio* sent out a distress call stating that it had hit an iceberg off the northwest coast of Greenland and was in need of immediate assistance. A nearby Canadian trawler responded to the scene after a few hours, but by the time it arrived the *Valenzio* was partially submerged. There was a vast gash in the side of the freighter and an abundance of spilled oil which had proceeded to pollute the shoreline. A quick search of the exposed portions of the ship found no survivors. Even more curious, there were no traces of bodies. All that was found were large scrapes along the sides of the ship caused by the iceberg and oil slicks on the deck from the spill.

Now the AmerOil Company has hired the investigators to find out what happened to the crew for purposes of the payment of insurance policies.



Possibilities

1. The S.S. *Valenzio* was sailing past the northwest coast of Greenland at the wrong time and its searchlights interrupted a ceremonial ritual being performed along the shore by a degenerate cult of Inuit worshippers dedicated to Cthulhu. The cultists concluded their ritual with a summoning of a Star Spawn of Cthulhu, who destroyed the ship and disposed of the crew. Investigations in the area may reveal documents written in 1860 by the late Professor William Channing Webb of Princeton University concerning "an isolated tribe of Eskimo shunned and feared by the other tribes in the area." They supposedly performed sacrificial rites before an ancient rock carving depicting a *tornasuk*, or great devil. The *tornasuk* was a huge, squid-headed creature called Kthulhut.

2. The S.S. *Valenzio* did actually strike an iceberg on the eve of April 4. All hands abandoned ship but were lost in a storm that occurred that night. Traces of the longboats wash onto the shore several miles south of the wreck after a couple of days.

A *Tale of Terror* is a short scenario premise, with three different possibilities for what's really going on. Keepers can mine them for ideas, taking that which appeals and discarding that which does not.

3. The *S.S. Valenzio* did indeed run into an iceberg, which has since drifted further south. But this iceberg broke off a glacier that contained the remains of an ancient Hyperborean temple dedicated to Tsathoggua.

The collision with the iceberg also freed the guardian of the temple, a Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua. The Spawn immediately attacked the ship, devouring all of the crew. It is ooze from the Spawn that was left on the ship, not oil from the spill. Even now, the Formless Spawn rests in the submerged portion of the ship.

The remains of the temple or traces of Tsath-yo, the Hyperborean hieroglyphic writings, might be found if the investigators are quick to realize that the iceberg has since drifted south and can reach it before it melts.

Mysterious Manuscript: Lord of the Yellow Sign—*Continued from p. 8*

This new project was based on one of Routhgate's most favorite works: the little-known yet infamous play *The King in Yellow*. The film was to be partly a reenactment of the play and partly an autobiographical study of the director's interest in the work. It would show a young Ralph Routhgate first stumbling upon the book in his father's study, then follow his life as his obsession with the haunting and ambiguous play grows. In the end, the play's climax would coincide with him (the fictional Routhgate) finally reaching some great understanding of the universe. One interesting note: they were shooting that climactic ending when the murder and fire claimed most of their lives.

Only twenty copies of the screenplay were said to be made. They were typed on plain, white paper and bound in imitation black leather folders. On the front cover was the name of the film, and Routhgate's name. On the back in pressed goldleaf was that most-peculiar symbol known as the Yellow Sign. The binding was not very sturdy, being only twine, and it was prone to breaking and thus spilling out its contents. Of all the copies made, only one is said to remain; all others were lost in the fire that ended the production. Incredibly enough, the one surviving copy is Routhgate's personal, annotated copy.

The bulk of the text is a typical (albeit horrifying) screenplay for a motion picture. There is mention of backgrounds, camera angles, lighting to be used, actions of the actors, but no dialog. This was the era of the silent film; so in its place is a list of dialog cards for corresponding scenes. What makes this work so interesting to occultists and film historians alike is the handwritten notes and doodles in the blank spaces and margins of the script inscribed by Routhgate

Written in both ink and pencil, these cryptic words and pictures seem to attest to Routhgate's descent into madness as the film's production continued. At first they are no more than notes to himself on changes in the script, but they soon take on a darker and more-sinister meaning. In some places Routhgate refuses to write in English, instead substituting Latin. Towards the end of the shoot he begins to ramble on in a strange language known to no man. Laced throughout the script is veiled references of violence and hatred felt for all in the production, as well as clandestine meetings with a strange man having no name.

Exactly what happened that final night no one can tell. The official story says Routhgate went mad and, after killing most everyone, set the stage alight and died in the inferno. There are two other versions of that story: one says that someone other then Routhgate who was dressed as the Yellow Lord is the one who committed the murders. The other version tells of a survivor watching as the set burn who said she could see a figure dressed in an old yellow gown dancing and twirling amongst the flames, but never once catching on fire.

Excerpt

Once again that fool Schmidt could not capture the essence of my Pale Lord; it was a mistake to have cast him in the part. My benefactor came to me again last night, alone, on the dark set, and He is not pleased! He told me to get rid of Schmidt and quickly. Who am I to argue with Him whose name is not known even to me. He said he knows the perfect replacement for him, someone much older but who knows the part well. I will have to get rid of Schmidt quietly so as not to anger the other actors. It is good that we are shooting near the ocean. Tomorrow we shoot the ending climax and everything must be perfect.

FROM BEYOND

Facing Racism in Lovecraft and Call of Cthulhu

by Jason Thompson

Alt.horror.cthulhu is usually a sedate internet discussion group, with useful discussion alternating with "Where's the *Necronomicon?*" crank calls. However, one subject always sparks massive arguments among roleplayers and Lovecraft scholars alike. *Was Lovecraft a racist?* "No he wasn't!" half the readers scream, but I believe he was. And, without condoning it or condemning Lovecraft, being aware of it can help build drama in Lovecraftian studies, stories...and gaming.

Of course this is an old topic. It's tiresome having people qualify every positive statement about Lovecraft with "of course, he was a *racist*," and today the threat of Political Correctness, whether real or overhyped, makes lovers of writing for its own sake defensive. But accusations against Lovecraft are much harder to deny than accusations against (pick a white male, any white male) Mark Twain. Compared to other writers of his period, Lovecraft was more racist than most—or if not, then he had the bad luck to be more forward about it.

But Lovecraft's forwardness distinguishes his racism from the norm—the occasional stereotypes or snide comments that often shock us and distance us from the author when we read material from before the 1960s. His ancestral horrors have aged best where they are most explicitly part of the theme; "Arthur Jermyn" offends no one, whereas the unnecessary bigotry in "Herbert West: Reanimator" stops modern readers in their tracks. Civilizations decomposing, noble races overwhelmed by Flying Polyps or evil Inutos, people de-evolving into ghouls or white apes or scaly fish-beings...if you're going to define the Cthulhu Mythos then racial struggle is a major part of it, worth treating as an explicit element in Lovecraft pastiches and *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios.

Although *Call of Cthulhu* generally treats the 1920s with historical accuracy (or at least the rulebook's "friendly stereotypes"), race relations are addressed in relatively few published adventures set in this time of emerging Nazism and the KKK (aside from the generic "the Nazis worship the Mythos" villain-clumping). Mark Morrison's adventure "Dead-Man Stomp" is an excellent exception, practically a supplement to the 5th edition on the subject. I often wonder how many people play black, or other non-white, investigators, putting them into situations Lovecraft mostly reserved for his pasty New Englanders. Roleplaying a non-white investigator in *Call of Cthulhu* invites the same questions about realism as roleplaying a female fighter in a historical medieval campaign—roleplaying is escapism and few like playing oppressed minorities, but if the investigators are blithely freed from the prejudices of the period, is it historical realism? How many Tribal Fishermen *are* there in CoC campaigns?

The first option for 1920s *Call of Cthulhu* is to ignore racism. However, when you draw too strongly from a Lovecraftian background the number of cultists and cronies who happen to be racial minorities can be notable, even if you are outwardly neutral. In one shoddy campaign I participated in, a fellow player, already irritated at the Keeper, announced that his lawyer investigator would defend the rights of two stereotypical East Indian immigrants whom the Keeper had introduced as throwaway cultist stooges. Their total lack of characterization, combined with their Fu Manchu pulp foreignness, coincided with the out-of-character discovery that our Keeper was a racist. This is not to suggest that Lovecraft fans are racists, any more than *Hellraiser* fans are sadomasochists, but this was a disturbing exception.

The second option is to challenge racism, making the PCs into implausibly '90s-thinking (and therefore "good") people for their time. In his game *Over the Edge*, Jonathan Tweet advises GMs and Keepers to tackle political and social issues in their games, but it is touchy stuff, easy to sink into propaganda. As a Keeper, I sometimes replace classifications that would (in Lovecraft's writing) probably be racial with psychological ones; in my *Masks of Nyarlathotep* campaign, the African cultists lost some of their homogeneity and became more of a polyglot group of desperate outcasts and ruthless killers of all skin colors. But equal opportunity evil can become absurd or limiting. If in *Call of Cthulhu* the investigators are usually "good guys" saving the world, remember that this occurs in Lovecraft's amoral universe and would grow

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This is an opinion column, open to anyone who wants to write on matters concerned with *Call of Cthulhu* and the Cthulhu Mythos. Opinions expressed are those of the writer, not the publisher.

tedious if morality was policed by the Keeper or by helpful organizations (such as in *Ghostbusters* and *Chill*). RPGs are not behavior lessons with foregone conclusions; CoC players should have free will.

The third option is to use racism in the campaign as a theme. Lovecraft's racism often shapes the course of the stories. Something that is merely vulgar at a personal level rises (writhes?) into nightmares like, "They were monstrous and nebulous adumbrations of the pithecanthropoid and amoebal; vaguely moulded from some stinking viscous slime of the earth's corruption, and slithering and oozing in and on the filthy streets or in and out of windows and doorways in a fashion suggestive of nothing but infesting worms." When you realize he's talking about his virtual *neighbours* in New York City, there's a second's pause before you allow yourself to feel the visceral terror of the description. This does not necessarily weaken the effect, but it reminds you of the author's presence behind the words, and of the author's time. God Forbid that writers should not have their neuroses and weird qualities, as we all do. Robert Bloch's introduction to several Lovecraft collections, "A Heritage of Horror," says this well.

In Lovecraft, deny it or not, racism is a common element in the fear. Stories like "Arthur Jermyn" or "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" show that to Lovecraft, the foundations of rational society weren't necessarily cultural or social, but also genetic. Yes, it's because of all the things he read back then in the early 1900s when he was growing up…just as we are the way we are because of all our influences now in the latter half of the twentieth century. I enjoy old horror fiction, but have to clench my teeth to get through the sexism in *The Night Land* by W.H. Hodgson, for instance. These things were simply taken for granted…but if we do not examine the way our society conditions us to be, we're no more 'enlightened' than they were.

Lovecraft should not be dismissed from the canon due to his personal tendencies, or labelled or blacklisted as a 'racist writer.' Readers must accept things like racism and sexism, which are as changeable as etiquette, if they expect to read any past literature with "an open mind" (now there's an objective phrase). A recent performance of *The Merchant of Venice* in my area drew confused but impressed reviews precisely because it was totally *non*-revisionist, and enacted Shakespeare's play as painfully anti-Semitically as Shakespeare apparently intended it. However, Lovecraft's personal traits can be an interesting and useful converse to his fiction. I can't resist, when referring to Lovecraft, to poke fun at (or scrape steel wool over) his sore spots, the parts of his life which may, or may not, provide insight into his stories. In the end, of course, his stories must stand on their own, not be read as some kind of fake diary. But I believe that, if we are to judge Lovecraft by the big tottering construct called the Cthulhu Mythos, there is no purer source of the Mythos than in the life and thoughts of HPL himself.

Trying to link Lovecraft's fiction to his life reeks of amateur psychology, but consider how much more fascinating Lovecraft's life was than many of his imitators' stories! In your campaign, New York may be the city of corruption Lovecraft imagined it was…cats might in fact be the ideal animal…and the investigators might suffer from inhuman genes, ancestral syphilis, or any of the other racial horrors HPL thought about. They may encounter (or be) racists or imperialists appropriate to the 1890s or 1920s, and have their beliefs challenged. They may find themselves abused, if they are minorities, or unable to win the trust of minorities if they are white. They may run into disturbing documents in the forbidden-books style which play off all of Lovecraft's fears of reproduction and racial decay (as far as Things Man Was Not Meant to Know goes, what could be a worse taboo for modern players to face?). They may question whether certain people (Innsmouthers, Tcho-Tchos) are innately evil and can be slaughtered like orcs in *Dungeons & Dragons*. The situation may be reversed; upper-class whites may be the most infiltrated by the Great Old Ones, to consolidate their power in society. They may begin to change themselves, as in "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" or Ramsey Campbell's "The Faces at Pine Dunes." But in all cases, the Keeper should be fair, balancing the most offensive theories and sickening possibilities with realistic human behavior on the part of the NPCs.

It may be a little too self-referential, too much like winking at the reader (or player), but I think the Mythos benefits from awareness of these themes; not in order to 'correct' Lovecraft, but just to acknowledge them as a part of the many-faceted author and his many-faceted world.

Charles Fort

by Michael D. Winkle

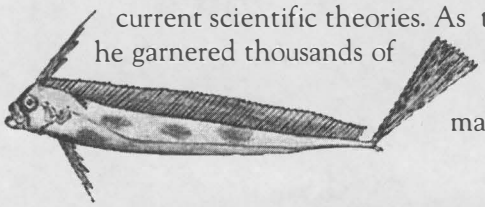
Fanatical extremists went so far as to hint at possible meanings in...the extravagant books of Charles Fort with their claims that voyagers from other worlds and outer space have often visited the earth. —H.P. Lovecraft, "The Whisperer in Darkness"

Charles Hoy Fort was born August 6, 1874, in Albany, New York, the son of Charles Nelson and Agnes Fort. Agnes Fort bore two other sons in the next four years and then died unexpectedly. The elder Fort raised his three boys as he saw fit, in a fashion brutal even by Victorian standards. He was not above lashing his sons with a dog whip, slapping them so hard that they bled, and even locking them in a tiny, dark pantry for days or weeks at a time.[1] Charles Hoy, in later years, referred to his father only as "They." This upbringing seemed to instill in him a distrust of authority figures of any kind, whether political, philosophical, or scientific.

One night in 1892, the teenaged Charles Fort came home to discover that "They" had locked him out of the house. Charles smashed a glass door in anger, and the elder Fort ordered him to sleep in the basement. Even though Charles sat at the table, he was not served breakfast for a week. Finally he came to blows with his father and he found that he could overpower the older man.

This began a new era of freedom in his life. His grandfather having died and left him a small inheritance, Fort travelled around the world. He fell ill in South Africa and returned to New York, where he married a woman named Anna Filing in 1896.

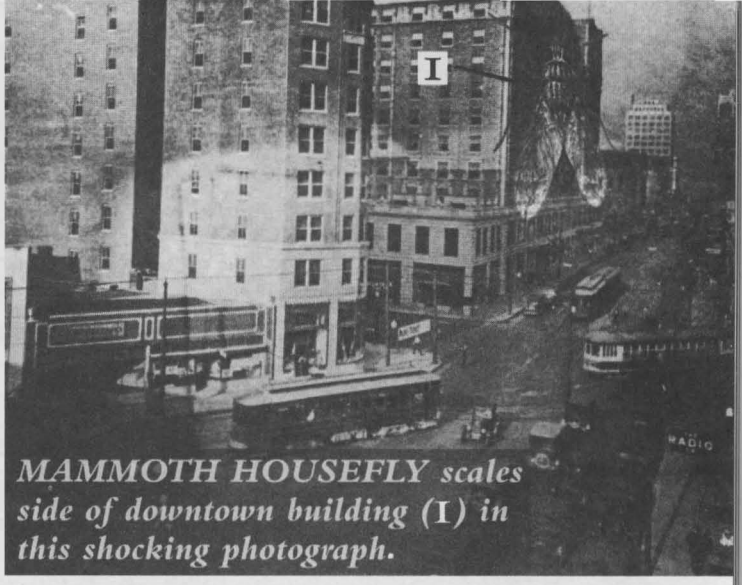
Fort worked as a reporter and published short stories as well as one novel, *The Outcast Manufacturers* (1909), but much of his adult life he spent in poverty in New York City. In 1916, he came into another modest inheritance after his uncle Frank A. Fort died. This allowed him to quit more mundane jobs and take up an odd pursuit: reading the back files of newspapers, science journals, and popular magazines, taking notes on any report of phenomena that did not fit current scientific theories. As the years passed, he garnered thousands of notes, which he used as raw material for several curious books. "We shall have a procession of data that Science has excluded."[2]



His first two efforts, *X* and *Y*, Fort burned for reasons unknown. His next volume was entitled *The Book of the Damned* (1919). The publishers in New York considered it unsalable, but fortunately, Fort had been befriended by renowned novelist Theodore Dreiser and eventually *The Book of the Damned* and three other volumes on strange phenomena saw publication.

The Book of the Damned was quite unlike contemporary books on the unexplained. Fort uncovered reports, not of moaning spirits and mediums' materializations, but of phenomena that hardly anyone had ever heard of, yet which appeared to be downright common—and totally at odds with the scientific world view. "I never write about marvels," he wrote in *Wild Talents* (1932). "All books written by me are of quite ordinary occurrences."

***STRANGE MANIFESTATION** of the disembodied head of Charles Fort (1) and what appears to be a Filefish (2) can not be found in the original version of this photograph.*



***MAMMOTH HOUSEFLY** scales side of downtown building (I) in this shocking photograph.*

Fort gave page after page of odd materials descending from the heavens: dust, coke, ashes, frogs, crabs, worms, blood, flesh, multicolored rain and snow—hundreds of instances of strange substances and living creatures falling with rain, or even out of the clear blue sky. The circumstances seemed, in most cases, to preclude the idea that the frogs, leaves, flesh, etc., had been sucked up in a tornado or whirlwind, to be dropped later. Fort suggested that a force called *teleportation* was at work. He did not define this word in the sense it is used today (*i.e.*, instantaneous transportation from one point to another). Fort envisioned the world or the universe as a single macrocreature, an "organic existence," and the mysterious flows and falls as caused by a super cardiovascular system. That is to say, frogs or water or flesh were teleported to different points of the earth the same way food and oxygen are delivered to cells in the human body by the bloodstream. To back this up, he studied scientific journals and found reports of "wantings" before the falls: a summer bereft of insects before insect showers, a drought before water spilled out of thin air, *etc.* The cosmic cardiovascular system was a mechanistic supernaturalism (like HPL's mythos), bringing manna to the starving, not in the manner of gods bestowing miracles but like a physical body repairing itself.

> "I think we're property.
> I should say we belong to something:
> That once upon a time, this earth was No man's Land, that other worlds explored and colonized here, and fought amongst themselves for possession, but that now it's owned by something."[3]

Long before the term "flying saucer" was coined, Fort suggested that extraterrestrials had visited the earth. As the above guote shows, he even imagined that someone—or something—*owned* our world, foreshadowing the spawn of Cthulhu, the Great Race, and other primordial creatures that vied for control of this planet in Lovecraft's writings. Fort envisioned cosmic beings of a very visceral nature—no Olympian deities, but Things that battled and killed, the losers raining blood and flesh to earth: "A thing the size of the Brooklyn Bridge. It's alive in outer space—something the size of Central Park kills it—It drips."[4] His teleportation/circulatory system, far from being a spiritual God or Gaea, was more like a monstrous organism on which we are parasites. HPL's ideas of physical, quasi-scientific gods and monsters are in sympathy with those of Fort.

Another one of Lovecraft's pet motifs can be found in Fort's work. While other early books on the unexplained commonly altered or excluded the names of the participatns and the towns in which they lived, Fort buried his readers with sources, from *The American Journal of Science* to *Nature* to the *Illustrated London News*, always careful to give volume, date, and page number. Similarly, while earlier horror tales usually took place long ago and far away, Lovecraft's stories provided the reader with names, dates, places, newspaper clippings, and other "evidence" documenting the Cthulhuvian manifestation.

Fort followed *The Book of the Damned* with *New Lands* in 1923, which carried reports of what might be glimpses of parallel worlds. Shades of the *Necronomicon*—novelist and playwright Ben Hecht predicted that "five out of six persons who read this book will go mad."[5] *LO!* appeared in 1931, covering mysterious sky-falls again but branching out into monster manifestations, the mysterious appearances and disappearances of people, spontaneous human combustion, and strange geological events (like what are now termed earthquake lights). His final volume, *Wild Talents*, concentrated on poltergeists and mental powers.

In February, 1932, Fort fell deathly ill. He barely managed to finish *Wild Talents* before he collapsed. On May 3, 1932, he was taken to Royal Hospital in New York, and he died the same day. His work in investigating the unexplained has been carried on by various authors, such as Ivan Sanderson, John Keel, and Loren Coleman, and organizations such as the Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained, the International Fortean Organization, and *The Fortean Times*.

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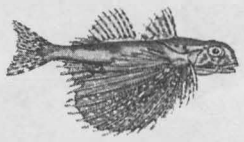
[1] Knight, Damon, *Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained* (Doubleday, 1970), pp. 12-13.
[2] *The Complete Books of Charles Fort* (Dover Books, 1974), p. 3.
[3] Ibid., p. 163.
[4] Ibid., p. 304.
[5] Knight, *op cit.*, p. 178.



MYSTERIOUS MANUSCRIPTS

Charles Fort's X and Y

by Michael D. Winkle

Commentary by Charles Hoy Fort. **Language**: English **Cthulhu Mythos**: +2
Sanity: lD3 **Spell Multiplier**: x2 **Study Time**: 1 month **Printing**: Dover Books, 1988
Spells: None

X was organized around the notion that our civilization is invisibly controlled by beings on the planet Mars (anticipating Fort's famous line, "I think we're property."). In Y, Fort imagined another sinister civilization, a little closer at hand—at the South Pole.[1]

Charles Fort was the first man to gather together accounts of strange creatures, powers, and phenomena that were moldering away in old newspapers and periodicals. Red rains, giant snowflakes, live frogs, and manufactured items falling from the sky; monsters and ghosts seen and unidentifiable footprints found; mysterious objects in the air and in the sea—all these things that stuffy scientists (and not a few Miskatonic professors) wish humanity would forget, Fort re-discovered and wrote up in his books, *The Book of the Damned*, *LO!*, *New Lands*, and *Wild Talents*.

Before these volumes appeared, however, Fort wrote two manuscripts called simply X and Y. In 1918, he claimed to have burned the only copies of these books. Fortunately, Fort's literary supporter, Theodore Dreiser, had copies of his own typed by his secretary,and he kept them well hidden.

It is not known who had access to the two manuscripts in the decades following Fort's death, but home-made versions of the books, mimeographed by fans of the iconoclastic writer (known as "Forteans"), circulated throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1988, Dover

Excerpt from X

A clown lies on his back, spinning a ball on his big floppy shoes. The ball turns, green and blue, with white wisps whipping over its surface in cotton-candy swirls. The clown's back rests on the broad plank of the Milky Way, his red rubber nose is the planet Mercury. His spotlight is the Sun, the three rings of his circus are looped about Saturn.

The clown smiles, his painted grin the red spot of Jupiter. He has stars for eyes, frizzy comets for hair.

He studies the blue-green ball, spinning in space, and thinks of something funny he might do with it. He releases his flea circus upon it, and his tiny critters perform on the ball as he performs *with* it:

American Journal of Science, 2:4, 1847: That a "new" monster, the *minhocao*, is loose in South America. "Minhocao is an augmentative of *minhoca*, which in Portuguese signifies earth- worm; and indeed they state that the monster in question absolutely resembles these worms." *Nature*, 21 February 1878: That in the year 1849 a dead minhocao was discovered in Uruguay: "Its skin was said to be as thick as the bark of a pine-tree, and formed of hard scales like those of an armadillo."

Zoologist, July 1868: A monster "bird" in Chile: "Its immense wings were clothed with a grayish plumage, its monstrous head was like that of a locust, its eyes were wide open and shone like burning coals." *Cambrian Natural Observer*, 1905-35: That something appeared in the sky above Llangollen, Wales, on Sept. 2, 1905. It looked like a huge, winged pig, with webbed feet. *Brooklyn Eagle*, Sept. 10, 1891—a monster seen in the sky at Crawfordsville, Indiana, on the 4th and 5th. It resembled a cloud with fins and a single glowing eye. It "squirmed as if in agony" and emitted a "wheezing, plainting sound."

The clown's audience on Mars cheers with cicada buzzes and flute whistles. The clown gives a cosmic bow.

Books published the two manuscripts in one volume as a companion to their *Complete Books of Charles Fort*.

X

Part of X describes a Martian civilization that has influenced people and events on the earth. These "Martians" may actually be the Shan, a.k.a. the Insects from Shaggai, for reasons to be explained shortly.

Most of X is concerned with phenomena more cosmic than mere inhabitants of the Red Planet. Theodore Dreiser recalled:

> Fort, in his book, saw certain rays, only he did not call them X or Cosmic, for X was the mysterious something from which these rays were emanating. These rays were the emanations of something that was capable through them as a medium of creating us, you, me, all animals, plants, the earth and its fullness, its beauty and variety and strangeness...[2]

Fort's "X" was the "Prime Mover" of all things that exist, apparently his name for the Outer God Azathoth, believed nowadays to be a remnant of the Big Bang—which was, indeed, the phenomenon that created the earth and its fullness.

And its strangeness: Fort writes of frogs and fish and worms raining out of the clear blue sky; spontaneous human combustion; planets and comets appearing before and disappearing from the astronomers' telescopes; phantom attackers, monsters, and poltergeists. He collected thousands of reports of these and other inexplicable—one might even say ridiculous—phenomena. Once he realized there existed a cosmic being, "X," causing these things, Fort felt disillusionment: "It will be an expression of mine that there is a godness in this idiocy...Maybe he, or it, drools comets and gibbers earthquakes," he wrote later in *LO!*[3] (the original title of which was going to be *God Is an Idiot*).

Other Fortean researchers have suggested the existence of a "Cosmic Trickster" or "planetary poltergeist" creating strange phenomena and teleporting bizarre creatures to Earth, apparently just for the hell of it. Writer John Keel—after chasing yeti, the "Mothman," UFOs, and red-eyed monsters for years—admitted that, "Charles Fort's question always bothered me: 'If there is a universal mind, must it be sane?'"[4]

X's biggest revelation, then, is that "X" (Azathoth), far from being a mindless, amorphous blob remote from Earth, in fact holds continual and widespread sway over our planet, in the form of supernormal events. Why it should, for instance, cause an old woman in Florida to burst into flame, or teleport people from one part of England to another, is a question even Fort could not answer. Perhaps there *is* no reason, because Azathoth/X has no rationality as we know it. Perhaps there are reasons that make sense in some non-Euclidean fashion. Strangest of all—and a conclusion guaranteed to cost investigators a sanity point or two—maybe Fort's cosmic-clown analogy is close to the truth, and Azathoth/X does these things because it has a *sense of humor*.

It was suggested earlier that the Martians mentioned in X might be the Insects from Shaggai, though the Shan are not known to have a colony on the Red Planet. Fort claimed the Martians focused "X"'s cosmic rays, so that they can affect the earth more easily. The only advanced civilization that actually worships X/Azathoth is that of the Shan, so it is logical to assume they are the creatures helping it. Science-fiction writer Damon Knight, in his biography of Fort, charted Fort's data and discovered that the weird events came in cycles of 9.6 years. He reached the same conclusions that his predecessor did in X: "These cycles of activity, which pass through our world like

Excerpt from Y

A musing:

That there may dwell among the people of this world—or near them, at any rate—beings that are not people, or are not of this world.

That, further, a few of the people of this world have come into contact with Them; and that said people have recorded their encounters, as encounters with satyrs, and dragons, and ghosts, and demons.

Amusing?

Robert Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth,* 1691, speaking of "Subterranean Inhabitants": "they are...in appearance even as wee, (unless they so do for a mock-show, or to prognosticate som such things to be among us)." Too old an account, by a superstitious clergyman? Nikola Tesla, 1900: "We cannot even with positive assurance assert that some of them might not be present here in this our world in the very midst of us, for their constitution and life manifestations may be such that we are unable to perceive them."

radio waves of enormous length, must have a common cause. The cause of the cycles, the controlling force that keeps them in synchrony, must lie outside the Earth." Knight added that "these periodicities had something to do with the oppositions of Mars."[5]

Y

Y's Antarctic civilization is presumably that of the Primordial Ones of *At the Mountains of Madness*. The inhabitants of "Y-land," according to Fort, have secretly guided the course of civilization over the eons. The Primordial Ones and other forgotten races, like the Serpent Men, have certainly had a subtle and insidious influence over peoples past and present. Fort believed that Kaspar Hauser, Cagliostro, and other persons who appeared from "nowhere," were emissaries from "Y-land." Were they exiles? Spies? Ambassadors? They may have served some purpose we can't imagine, the same way that a bear studied by biologists wouldn't know what purpose its radio-collar serves.

An investigator reading Y will learn of the effect non-human races have had on events of human history, such as the sinking of Atlantis, the fall of Troy, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the Lincoln assassination. Keepers might devise other Illuminatus-type plots, pertinent to their game scenarios, to be revealed by Y.

Conclusion

A final observation: Fortean investigators have noted the role of synchronicity in paranormal events. Those who start reading about and investigating such things as poltergeists, monsters, and UFOs sometimes attract odd happenings. Perhaps they catch the attention of "X" in one of its playful moods. This phenomenon seems particularly to follow those who read X and Y.. (This distortion of probability is the reason for the x2 spell multiplier, though the books contain no spells. A keeper might increase the chance of encounters with villains and creatures while his investigators are studying Fort's books and perhaps toss in the occasional rain of frogs to keep their sense of wonder fresh.

---

[1] Knight, Damon, *Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained* (Doubleday, 1970), p. 55.

[2] Dreiser, Helen, *My Life with Dreiser*, quoted in Knight, P. 59.

[3] *The Complete Books of Charles Fort* (Dover Books, 1974), p. 552.

[4] Keel, John, *The Mothman Prophesies* (E. P. Dutton, 1975), p. 267.

[5] Knight, *op cit.*, pp. 109, 111, 114.

DELTA GREEN

ALIEN INTELLIGENCE

EDITED BY BOB KRUGER

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ONE BECOMES AWARE OF THE GLOVE CLEANERS IN MUCH THE SAME WAY ONE WOULD BECOME AWARE OF GHOSTS—THEY ARE NOT ORGANIZED; THEY MUST HAVE SOME SORT OF COMMUNITY WITH EACH OTHER BUT THE NATURE OF SUCH A COMMUNITY IS SOMETHING ARCANE AND UNKNOWABLE; THEY MAY SHARE A NUMBER OF CHARACTERISTICS, OR EVEN BE IDENTICAL TO EACH OTHER

IN SOME WAYS, BUT EACH GLOVE CLEANER IS ULTIMATELY UNIQUE AND INDIVIDUAL. BUT GLOVE CLEANERS AREN'T GHOSTS, AND THEY AREN'T MEMBERS OF ANY KIND OF ORGANIZATION OR CULT—THEY ARE PEOPLE, FOR THE MOST PART FAIRLY ORDINARY PEOPLE, BUT WHO HAVE HAD SOME KIND OF (GENERALLY VAGUE) MYTHOS CONTENT OR KNOWLEDGE. THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN MARKED BY THE MYTHOS, AND, WHILE REMAINING COMPLETELY NEUTRAL TO THE HERMETIC BATTLES OF CULTISTS AND INVESTIGATORS, HAVE TAKEN IT UPON THEMSELVES TO SPREAD MYTHOS INFORMATION,

The first glove cleaners were, most likely, insignificant under-librarians, auction-house janitors, book clerks, jumble-shop owners. For reasons known only to them, if they are known at all, these people, upon coming into contact with Mythos texts, have felt an irresistible urge to propagate them. The first glove cleaner writings were hastily-typed pages, banged out in the middle of the night in libraries, or transcribed from diaries and personal papers discovered in second-hand dresser drawers. With easy access to mimeography, and later to photocopying, glove cleaning went into a new, and much more prolific, phase.

Glove cleaners almost never reproduce entire texts, even if the text is quite short. They tend to confine themselves to single chapters or salient verses, dashing off a dozen or so pages at the very most. Furthermore, the glove cleaners don't generally make more than a few copies of the same passage, and rarely keep any of them (lest the writings be discovered in their possession and used as "evidence"—glove cleaning is *by definition* a clandestine activity). The copied chapters and passages generally end up tacked to telephone poles, stuffed behind radiators in public lavatories, dropped at random into mailboxes, shoved under doors, left on tables in restaurants, or on park benches. Most glove cleaners are temperamentally drawn to abandoned, run-down places—condemned buildings are a favorite spot for leaving writings.

Glove cleaners are extremely hard to spot, and will never openly confess to being glove cleaners—although this does not prevent them from hinting. It should be pointed out that most glove cleaners don't know what a "glove cleaner" is, nor do they understand that there are any others. Most glove cleaners have above-average POW, and they tend to be somewhat plain in appearance (although this does not necessarily mean a low APP score). The majority seem to be smallish, middle-aged men with battered hats and shabby, down-at-heel clothes.

Glove cleaners seldom, if ever, write anything of their own, although when they do they seem to unilaterally turn to writing religious pamphlets of the sort that get stuck under windshield wipers—often with Mythos themes or references. They may or may not recognize each other, and some cities actually have bars or coffee houses that are primarily frequented by glove cleaners, although the glove cleaners do not identify themselves as such, nor do they ever talk about glove cleaning. Glove cleaners always work alone, and don't even talk to each other.

In campaigns, glove cleaners can be used to introduce minor doses of Mythos lore without having to resort to crusty old books or wild journals. Keepers can control precisely what the PCs find out, and can compress information into a few pages—exclude spells from Mythos material, or use the writings as a quick-and-dirty way of getting a given spell into the story. And, of course, the transcriptions of the glove cleaners, were they do fall into the hands of a disturbed or impressionable type, could spark an adventure very easily. The glove cleaners are a volatizing element in any campaign, and yet they play no active role of any kind, keeping completely out of the way of both the investigators and the NPCs.

"...And dare the icy deserts through the dark to where Unknown Kadath, veiled in clouds and crowned with unimagined stars, holds silent and nocturnal the onyx castle of the Great Ones."

H.P. Lovecraft's

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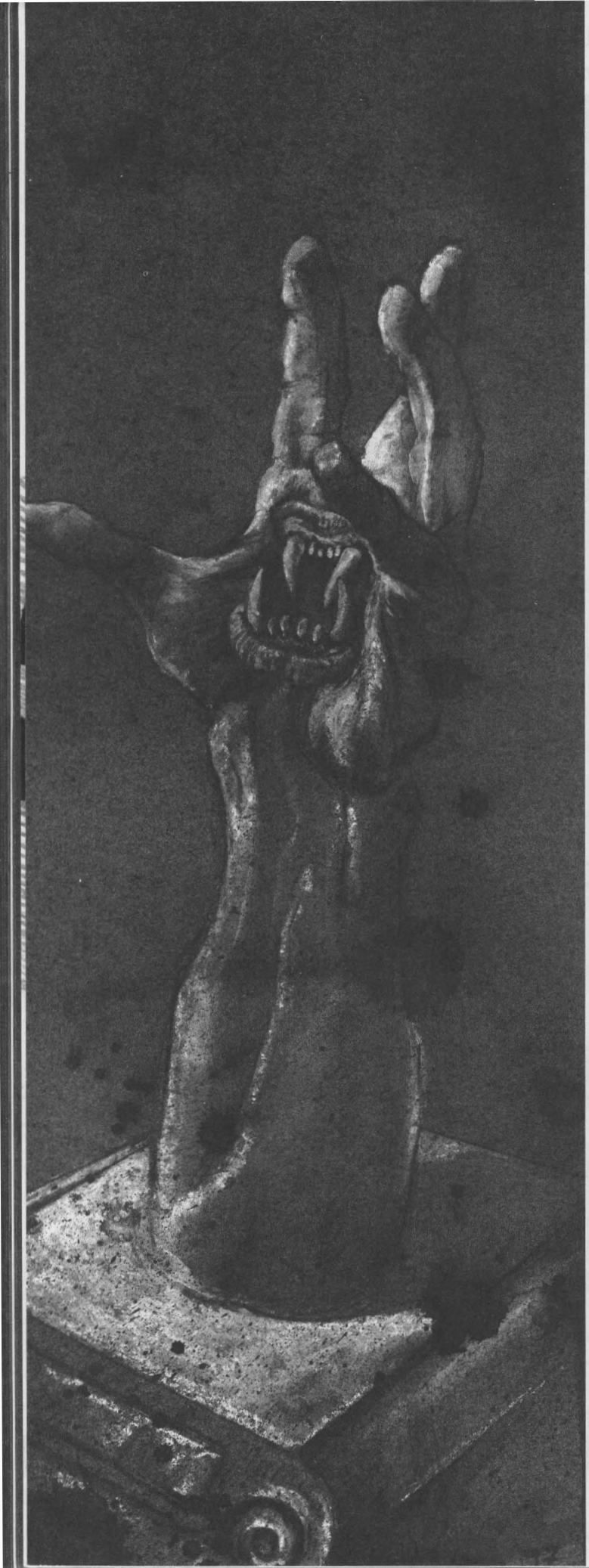


THE HAND OF Y'GOLONAC

Brian M. Sammons

This curious piece of antiquity has a history steeped in both madness and mystery. There have been rumors of the Hand's existence throughout the ages, chronicled in such diabolical tomes as *Unausprechliche Kulten*, *True Magick*, and the dreaded *Revelations of Glaaki*. The strange sculpture has reportedly been sighted in various locations over the course of history. These have included the court of a Russian Czar; the private chambers of a Vicar in Italy; and a bedroom in a brothel in France.

Of these sightings and the countless others like them, not one can be confirmed. Its capacity for corruption, however, is well-documented.

Appearance

The Hand of Y'golonac is cut from a single piece of green-grey stone, but the exact composition of the rock has never been identified. It is carved to look like the left hand and arm of a man from the elbow down. Where the elbow joint should be, there is the statue's base and the arm stands straight up from that. The hand is tilted back and the fingers are spread apart, with the tips curved slightly in. It appears that the sculptor designed the hand to cradle, or hold, some unidentified object.

There are two distinguishing features that identify the Hand. First, a mouth is carved into the palm of the hand. Its full lips are pulled back to reveal wickedly sharp teeth that appear more like those of an animal than a man.

The second feature is on the front of the base. There one finds a section of soft clay, 1 inch high by 5 inches long, set into the stone. It is from this rectangle of clay, the mouth set in the palm, and what they signify in tandem, that the Hand of Y'golonac gains its evil reputation.

Powers

According to scholars of the occult, the statue was carved by a powerful wizard in an ancient time. It is believed that the wizard was a high priest of an evil entity of perversion and corruption called Y'golonac. The Hand was reportedly able to communicate with Y'golonac from where he slept, behind a vast wall under the earth. The Hand also had another, more sinister purpose. It is said that a man with a heart heavy with sin could, with the proper incantation, extract a terrible vengeance upon an unknowing enemy. This horrendous attack would go undetected and could affect the chosen target wherever they may be. To enact the spell (which can be found in *Revelations of Glaaki, Volume XII*), all the attacker needs is the full name of his intended victim and the willingness to engage in any act, however abhorrent, to achieve his diabolical goal.

This attack is a slow corruption of the spirit and the darkening of the soul. First, the user of the Hand scribes the name of the intended victim on the base of the statue. The assailant must then undertake an act of the most loathsome nature and of his own devising; for some reason, these acts are often of a sexual nature. When the deed is done, the perpetrator takes with him some small item, or trinket, that represents the sinful act. This trophy is then placed in the stone hand of Y'golonac, which closes about it in a fist. The arcane statue then enacts a terrible power, cryptically referred to in tomes as the Touch of Y'golonac.

The unfortunate person whose name is scribed on the base of the statue begins to have strange, unsettling dreams. Foggy and unremarkable at first, the dreams become more and more clear until they begin to spill into the waking world. Unwholesome visions and thoughts will then assail the target night and day. Soon, the target will have an uncontrollable desire to commit whatever act the user of the Hand committed to activate the magic. Eventually, the willpower of the afflicted will fail before the relentless impulse and he will lustfully and wantonly perform the evil act. Once the desire is sated, the Hand will open up again. The item placed in its palm will be gone, and it will be ready for use once more.

Most often, the victim of repeated use of the Hand's power will commit suicide as an end to their suffering. In other cases, the owner of the hand might stop the attack, or be prevented from continuing it. In any event, those who are left after the Touch of Y'golonac has ended are forever changed. Repulsive, unwholesome, and sickening thoughts and desires will reside with the survivors for the rest of their lives, often spawning new obscenities as the years pass that need no magical impulse to occur.

The Hand of Y'golonac

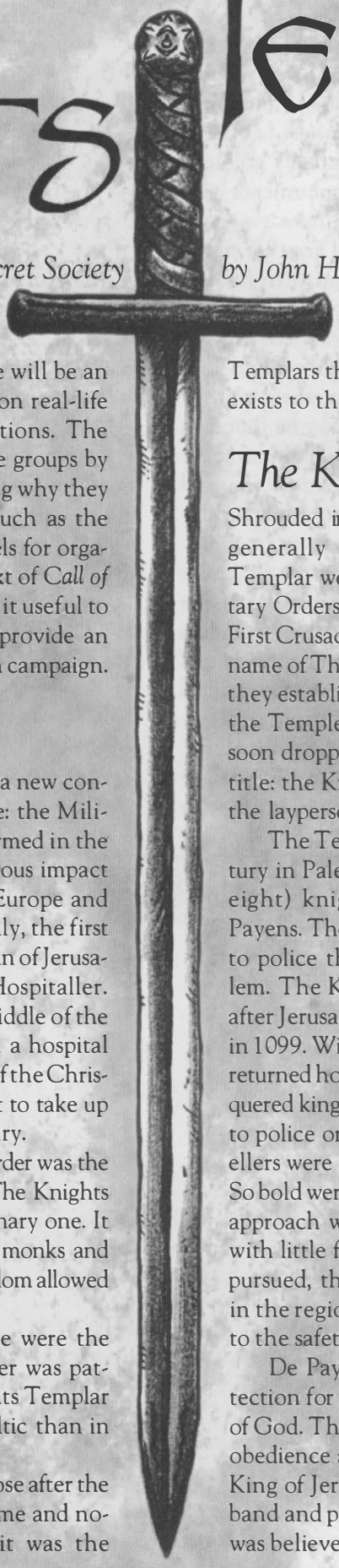
Height: from finger tips to base, 14"
Weight: 12 pounds, 2 ounces
Base: 8" x 8" x 2" tall
Creator: unknown
Powers: Contact Y'golonac (same as spell, but 3 Magic Points are lost instead of 1 POW and success is automatic); Touch of Y'Golonac (new spell, described below)

TOUCH OF Y'GOLONAC: This spell requires that the caster possess the Hand of Y'Golonac. To perform the spell, the user must commit a hurtful, malevolent act against another person and take away some small item related to the event—perhaps a button from a murder victim's shirt, for example. (SAN loss for the deed is up to the Keeper.) The caster inscribes a target's name into the soft clay at the base of the statue (this target is different from the victim of the recent crime), places the item from the crime into the palm of the Hand of Y'Golonac, spends 10 Magic Points, and loses 1D8 Sanity Points. The target of the spell experiences a period of strange dreams and impulses, culminating in a powerful compulsion to commit the same crime that the caster committed. The targeet may only resist this compulsion with a POW vs. POW resistance roll against the Hand. The first time this occurs, the Hand's effective POW is 15; each successful usage against the same target increases the Hand's POW by 1 point, but only against that target. (Any failed usage reduces the Hand's POW by 1 point when used against that target.) A failed resistance roll costs the target 1D6 Sanity Points, plus whatever is lost from his commission of the same vile crime performed by the caster. (The victim of the target and the victim of the caster do not have to be the same person, but are generally of the same gender, age, race, and social class.) If the victim wins the POW struggle then he will have horrid nightmares (0/1D2 Sanity Points) but suffers no other adverse effects—until the caster attacks again.

The Knights Templar

A Secret Society

by John H. Crowe, III



This is the first in what we hope will be an intermittent series of articles on real-life secret societies and organizations. The purpose is to shed some light on these groups by delving into their history and revealing why they existed and what they did. Groups such as the one presented here can serve as models for organizations employed within the context of *Call of Cthulhu*. Some readers may even find it useful to fictionalize some groups in order to provide an even greater touch of realism to a given campaign.

Introduction

In the aftermath of the First Crusade, a new concept was adopted in Christian Europe: the Military Order. Three such orders were formed in the twelfth century and all had a tremendous impact not only on the Holy Land, but on Europe and the Middle East as a whole. Technically, the first was the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, later to become the Knights Hospitaller. They trace their origins back to the middle of the eleventh century when they founded a hospital in Jerusalem that catered to the needs of the Christian pilgrims. However, they were not to take up arms until well into the twelfth century.

The first true Christian Military Order was the Knights of the Temple of Solomon: The Knights Templar. The concept was a revolutionary one. It was a group of knights who were also monks and were the only religious men in Christendom allowed to shed blood.

Last to arrive on the world scene were the Teutonic Knights. This German order was patterned off the highly successful Knights Templar and acted more in the area of the Baltic than in the Holy Land.

Other Christian Military Orders rose after the First Crusade, but none gained the fame and notoriety of these three. Of these, it was the Templars that died first, but one, the Hospitallers exists to this day.

The Knights Templar

Shrouded in mystery and tainted by heinous and generally baseless accusations, the Knights Templar were one of three great Christian Military Orders that arose in the years following the First Crusade. Known first under the cumbersome name of The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ, they established a temple on the supposed site of the Temple of Solomon. The original name was soon dropped, however, to be replaced by a new title: the Knights of the Temple of Solomon. To the layperson, they were the Knights Templar.

The Templars began early in the twelfth century in Palestine as a group of seven (or perhaps eight) knights and a leader named Hugh de Payens. The goal of this mere handful of men was to police the newly formed Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Kingdom itself had been formed soon after Jerusalem was captured by the First Crusade in 1099. With the Crusade over, most participants returned home to Europe. This left the newly conquered kingdom with no significant standing army to police or defend the realm. Pilgrims and travellers were often at the mercy of Muslim bandits. So bold were some of these bandits that they could approach within sight of the gates of Jerusalem with little fear of being caught. Even if they were pursued, the Muslims still controlled two cities in the region (Ascalon and Tyre) and could flee to the safety of their walls.

De Payens' hope was to provide armed protection for pilgrims and yet remain in the service of God. They took vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience and were soon noticed by Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem. He saw the potential of their band and provided concrete assistance. On what was believed to be the original site of the Temple

of Solomon, they were provided a building that was to become their central headquarters as long as Jerusalem remained in Christian hands. In 1125, Hugh de Payens was granted the title of Grand Master of Temple by Baldwin. By this time, the Order had been in existence only seven years.

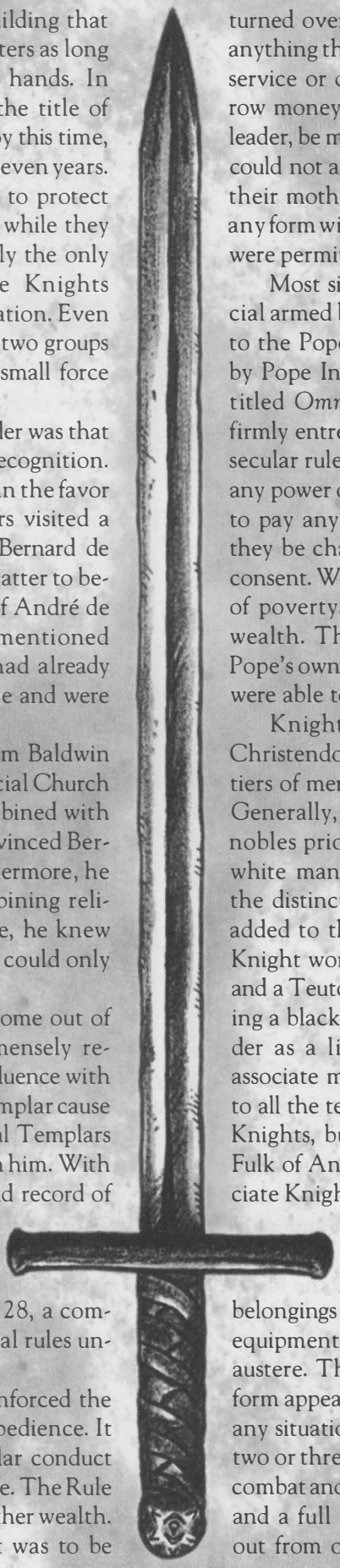
The Templars' main duties were to protect the Holy Land and to escort pilgrims while they were in the region. They were literally the only standing army available until the Knights Hospitaller became a military organization. Even with the help of the Hospitallers, the two groups together amounted to an alarmingly small force when compared to potential enemies.

An early obstacle faced by the Order was that they initially had no official Church recognition. Hugh de Payens was determined to gain the favor of the pontiff. In 1126, two Templars visited a monastery in France where resided Bernard de Clairvaux. By coincidence, Bernard (latter to become St. Bernard) was the nephew of André de Montbard, one of the two aforementioned Templars. By this time, the Order had already earned a considerable measure of fame and were known to Bernard.

André bore with him a letter from Baldwin asking Bernard to assist in gaining official Church sanction for the Templars. This, combined with the testimony of the two knights, convinced Bernard to give his eager approval. Furthermore, he saw the genius in the plan. By combining religion and the military in one package, he knew that Christianity's place in the world could only be strengthened.

Bernard was no minor abbot in some out of the way monastery. He was an immensely respected clergyman possessing great influence with the Pope. While he worked for the Templar cause in Rome, Hugh de Payens and several Templars travelled from Jerusalem to Italy to join him. With Bernard's backing and an already solid record of achievement in the Holy Land, it was not difficult at all to gain official sanction for the Order from Pope Honorius II. On January 13, 1128, a committee gathered to establish the official rules under which the Order was to exist.

Known simply as the Rule, it reinforced the triple vow of chastity, poverty, and obedience. It provided a firm framework of Templar conduct and guidelines on how they were to live. The Rule was strict, permitting no Knight to gather wealth. Any property obtained by a Knight was to be turned over to the Order. Knights could not do anything that would place them in someone else's service or debt. They could, therefore, not borrow money, swear fealty to a secular or religious leader, be married, or even act as a godfather. They could not associate with women and even kissing their mothers and sisters was forbidden. Sex in any form with any person was banned. No women were permitted to join the Order in any function.



Most significantly, for the first time an official armed body existed that was answerable only to the Pope. This was reinforced ten years later by Pope Innocent II when he issued a bull entitled *Omne Datum Optimum*. This document firmly entrenched the Order. It affirmed that no secular ruler or member of the clergy could exert any power over the Templars. They did not have to pay any taxes or tithes to anyone nor could they be charged with any crimes without papal consent. While individually, Templars took a vow of poverty, the Order itself could accumulate wealth. The Templars effectively became the Pope's own private army though in practice, they were able to remain largely autonomous.

Knights were recruited from throughout Christendom. The Order had essentially three tiers of membership. The first were the Knights. Generally, these men were secular knights or nobles prior to entering the Order. They wore white mantles and during the Second Crusade, the distinctive eight pointed Templar cross was added to their robes (by contrast, a Hospitaller Knight wore a red mantle bearing a white cross and a Teutonic Knight wore a white mantle bearing a black cross). Most Knights were in the Order as a lifetime calling, but some joined as associate members. As such, they had to adhere to all the tenets of the Rule and acted as full time Knights, but only for a specified period. Count Fulk of Anjou was perhaps the best known associate Knight. Years after his service to the Order, he became the King of Jerusalem.

Knights were impoverished. They were not permitted personal belongings or even to decorate themselves or their equipment. Everything they owned was plain and austere. This gave them a businesslike and uniform appearance, making them stand out in most any situation. Each had a full set of chain armor, two or three horses (one large warhorse for use in combat and one or two lesser ones for general use), and a full complement of weapons. They stood out from other Crusaders in one other respect.

They had short hair and long beards. The prevalent style in Europe was the opposite (men of means usually had long hair and were clean shaven). In Muslim areas, beards were considered a sign of manliness and this may have been to the Templars' advantage. It is very possible their foes perceived them to be the most formidable of the Christians and thus respected them for it.

After the Knights were the sergeants. They were not held to the strict standards of the Order and wore brown or black mantles. Referred to as "Brother," sergeants were free-born men of the bourgeoisie (middle class) and were armed, though usually not as heavily as the Knights. They served as squires, guards, and stewards and were an important addition to the fighting strength of the Order.

The third, and smallest, tier in the Templar hierarchy were the priests. They wore green robes and always wore gloves. As Templar priests, they were accountable only to the Grand Master of the Order and not to any outside clerical figure.

The leader of the Temple of Solomon was given the title of Grand Master. Throughout Europe, heads of Templar branches in various countries had their own Masters who were subject only to the Grand Master and, of course, the Pope. As an example, the Master of Aragon controlled all Templar activity in Aragon and was accountable to the Grand Master, not any local Church or secular ruler.

Throughout the almost two hundred years that they existed, the Knights of the Temple grew and expanded. This is not to say that they ever assembled a substantial force of Templars in Palestine. Rather, they grew in Europe.

The early years for the Temple was hard ones. Their numbers were few and their wealth virtually nonexistent. They depended on the generosity of Baldwin and handouts from sympathetic pilgrims. Even the clothes they wore were donated. However, as the Order gained fame and prestige, it began to attract devoted admirers. Donations began to stream in, both in the form of hard cash and in lands. None of this could be taxed. Lands generated further wealth for the Order. While they could not be taxed, the Knights were free to levy taxes on those residing on lands that they ruled.

Because the Order could accumulate wealth, it was possible for them to establish and maintain a supply system in Europe that fed their military efforts in the Holy Land. Donations to them had been generous. Great estates, manors, and castles belonging to the Order were located throughout Europe and the Holy Land. Their holdings in France, England, Iberia, and Sicily were especially extensive and they even purchased all of Cyprus from King Richard of England as the Third Crusade was coming to a close. These holdings were operated effectively by the Temple and served as a reasonably successful "Quartermaster Department." While most of their military strength was fighting (and often dying) in the eastern Mediterranean, their financial strength flourished in Europe. For a long time, the French treasury was even housed in the Paris Temple. The Order became an economic powerhouse, serving as a bank and lending money to many rulers in need of it (including the Pope). Though usury (the charging of interest) was a sin for Christians, the Order in its usual pragmatism was able to justify it by calling interest collected "fines" for using Temple funds. Similarly, storing money in Temple buildings was possible, though there was a fee for this as well. Despite the fees, money placed in Templar hands was reasonably safe from pilfering. Furthermore, one could obtain a receipt for these funds. This was redeemable at any Templar treasury. In other words, a noble depositing gold in the Paris Temple could travel all the way to Cyprus and redeem his receipt for cash. However it was justified, the Order was able to consistently get by rules that were otherwise a hindrance to the furtherance of their goals.

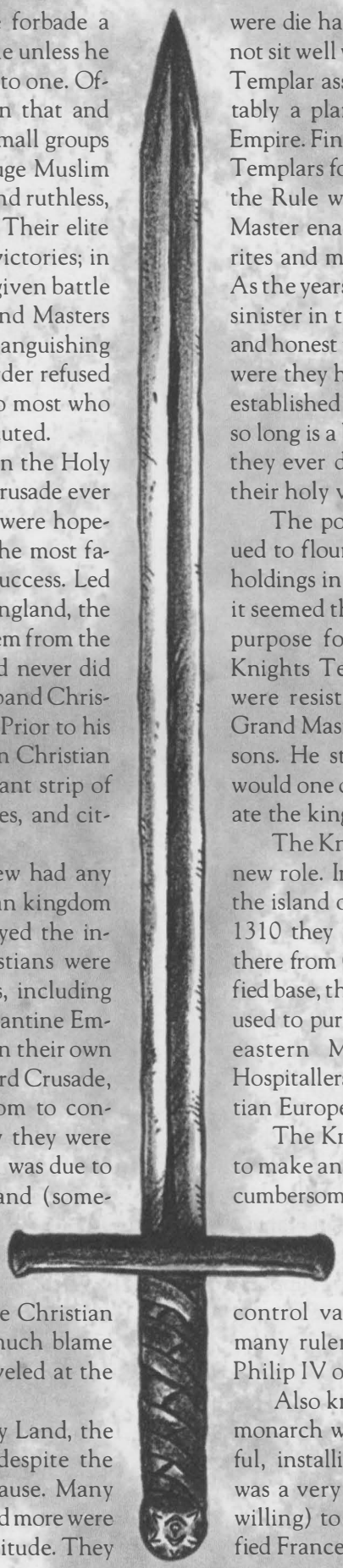
While it was certainly a devout religious organization, the Order was not slave to blind religious dogma. They were, in fact, extraordinarily pragmatic at times. The abovementioned justification of usury is only one example. While they were, in theory, not supposed to associate with infidels or make treaties with them, they were not necessarily uncompromising enemies of Islam. Their Muslim opponents found them to be generally trustworthy, a feature virtually unique among the Crusaders (and Europeans) who were accustomed to routinely breaking treaties when it suited them. Even the great Muslim ruler Salah-ad-din (better known to Europeans as Saladin) respected them although as holy warriors of another religious faith, he also hated them.

The Templars and Hospitallers were effectively the only standing armies in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. They were small forces, but elite ones which helped offset to some degree their diminu-

tive size. In fact, the Templar Rule forbade a Knight from ever retreating from battle unless he was outnumbered by more than three to one. Often the odds were much greater than that and there are many documented cases of small groups of Templars aggressively attacking huge Muslim armies. In combat, they were brutal and ruthless, often not showing mercy to captives. Their elite nature did not necessarily win them victories; in many cases most or all Templars in a given battle were killed or captured. Several Grand Masters of the Order died in combat or while languishing in Muslim prisons. Tragically, the Order refused to pay ransom for captured Knights so most who were captured were immediately executed.

Ultimately, the Christian effort in the Holy Land was for naught. Only the First Crusade ever achieved its goal. Most of the others were hopeless disasters. The Third Crusade is the most famous and did gain some measure of success. Led by King Richard (the Lionheart) of England, the goal was to liberate the city of Jerusalem from the Muslim forces led by Saladin. Richard never did seize Jerusalem, but he was able to expand Christian holdings along the coast greatly. Prior to his arrival, only one city, Acre, was left in Christian hands. When he left, a fairly significant strip of coastline including many ports, castles, and cities were Christian controlled.

Outside of these two crusades, few had any lasting positive effect for the Christian kingdom in Palestine. At best, they only delayed the inevitable fall. For decades, the Christians were outnumbered by enemies on all sides, including on occasion the Christians of the Byzantine Empire and even barons and nobles within their own ranks. With the conclusion of the Third Crusade, widespread desire within Christendom to continue crusades waned. The only way they were able to hold on for as long as they did was due to disunity among Muslim neighbors and (sometimes) effective diplomacy. Military might only rarely played a decisive and positive role for the Christians. Not surprisingly, when the last of the Christian holdings in Palestine fell in 1291, much blame for the catastrophe was (unfairly) leveled at the Military Orders.



As long as they were in the Holy Land, the Templars had a tangible function despite the growing number of critics of their cause. Many people began to fear their influence and more were angered by their often intransigent attitude. They were die hard supporters of the Pope and this did not sit well with many secular rulers. More wanted Templar assistance in various ventures, most notably a planned crusade against the Byzantine Empire. Finally, many people began to distrust the Templars for one very specific reason. Soon after the Rule was adopted by the Order, the Grand Master enacted a policy of secrecy. The Order's rites and meetings were to be kept confidential. As the years passed, many began to see something sinister in this policy. After all, if they were good and honest men, why was secrecy necessary? What were they hiding? Why the policy of secrecy was established and then why it was maintained for so long is a bit puzzling, but there is no indication they ever did anything that was in violation of their holy vows.

The power of the Knights Templar continued to flourish despite the final fall of Christian holdings in Palestine in 1291. However, to many it seemed they no longer had a mission or even a purpose for existing. Efforts to combine the Knights Templar with the Knights Hospitaller were resisted by Jacques de Molay, the (last) Grand Master of the Temple, for a variety of reasons. He still maintained some hope that they would one day return to the Holy Land and liberate the kingdom of Jerusalem.

The Knights Hospitaller went on to assume a new role. In 1309, they completed the seizure of the island of Rhodes from the Byzantines, and in 1310 they began to move their headquarters to there from Cyprus. Using Rhodes as a great fortified base, they built up a powerful fleet which they used to pursue and destroy Muslim pirates in the eastern Mediterranean. This allowed the Hospitallers to provide a tangible service to Christian Europe, which put them in a good light

The Knights of the Temple, however, failed to make any adjustments. They maintained their cumbersome economic and quartermaster system, one that was designed to support a military force for a kingdom that no longer existed. They continued to control vast holdings throughout Europe and many rulers began to covet these lands. King Philip IV of France was one such ruler.

Also known as Philip the Fair, this Capetian monarch was cold, calculating, and very powerful, installing fear in all those around him. He was a very effective king and few were able (or willing) to challenge him. He ruled a fairly unified France, not merely the Ile de France (the re-

gion immediately around Paris) that many of his predecessors had been limited to. Philip had many strains on him financially. Wars with his neighbors, including England, had left him financially burdened. Not surprisingly, he sought ways to relieve the burden he was under.

His first target were the Jews of France. Throughout Europe, Jews were great moneylenders. For them, usury was no sin and they could freely charge interest without having to worry about their immortal souls or Church condemnation. Philip owed them significant sums. His decision: arrest all French Jews. This eliminated the debt owed and permitted him to seize Jewish owned goods and monies. Few within the Christian community were willing to oppose him in this; after all, the Jews were considered to be as much the infidel as Muslims (example: when the Christians took Jerusalem in 1099, the city's Jewish population fled into their largest synagogue to escape the wholesale slaughter and avoid being mistaken for Muslims; the Crusaders burned the structure to the ground, killing all within). In a scheme that was a portent of the Templars' fate, virtually all Jews were arrested in a single day and were completely stripped of all wealth.

This was not enough for Philip. Not only did he desire more wealth, but he feared the influence of the Templars. Jacques de Molay had already firmly denounced any plan to go on crusade against the Christian Byzantines. For him, the goal should be to invade Palestine or Egypt with the ultimate goal to retake Jerusalem and reestablish the Christian Kingdom. The idea of attacking the Byzantines was superficially one that was designed to take on Christian heretics. The reality was that most simply wanted the vast wealth known to be in the Empire.

Political issues aside, Philip was more concerned with economics. He could not legally tax the Order and their substantial holdings in France denied him a lucrative portion of the potential tax base. Furthermore, their unwavering support of the Papacy was a thorn in his side since he opposed the strong Popes that held the office early in his rule. Only when he was able to help install a Pope to his liking, Clement V, was he able to take on the Templars.

In the first decade of the fourteenth century, Philip's plan unhatched. On Friday, October 13, 1307, several thousand Templars and their brethren in France were arrested. His timing was impeccable. Most high ranking Templars including the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, were in France at the time and were cast into prison. No one had suspected Philip's scheme and so effective was it that only a score or so of Knights escaped. Philip levelled outrageous and groundless charges of heresy at the Order. Both as individuals and as a group, the Templars were charged with an assortment of offenses including idolatry, sodomy, usury, and sorcery. No one challenged Philip's right to make the arrests. The problem was that heresy was a religious crime that was supposed to be tried in Church courts. Secular rulers could legally effect arrests and they could carry out sentences decreed by Church courts. However, they were not supposed to level charges, interrogate prisoners, extract confessions, or conduct trials. This is exactly what Philip did.

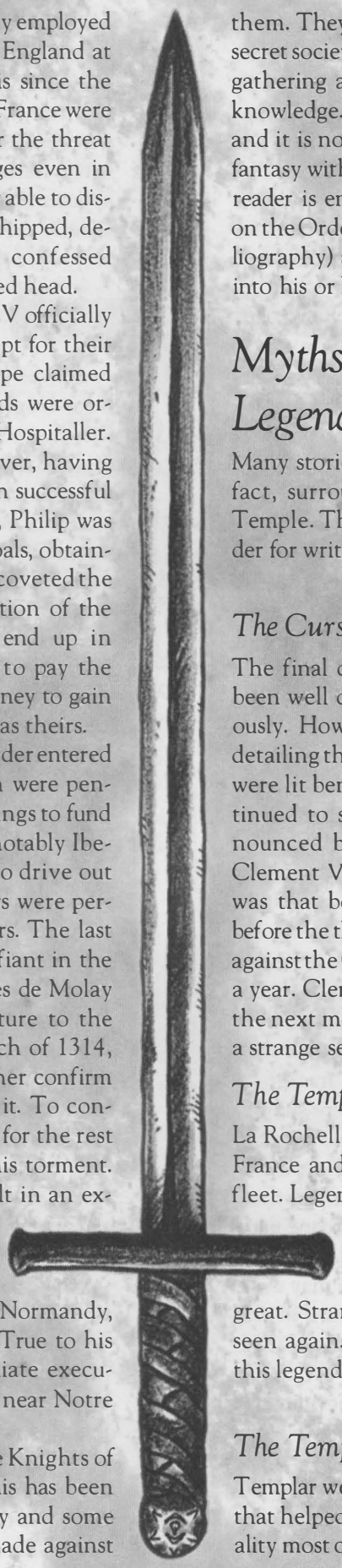
Over the next few years, the Templars were tortured and confessions were wrung out of them. The methods employed were viewed as being especially brutal even by the standards of the time. Many died in prison, often as the result of torture. Many more confessed in order to end their torment. Pope Clement V initially resisted Philip's efforts to some extent and for a while, it seemed that the Templars might be legally exonerated of all charges in Church courts. Unfortunately for the Order, Philip was able to circumvent Pope Clement's ecclesiastical court (largely by ignoring it and employing his own religious court) and soon many Templars were burned at the stake as convicted heretics. Clement eventually succumbed and ordered similar measures throughout Christendom despite little secular or clerical support outside of Philip's realm.

In areas controlled by France, the violent elimination of the Order was thorough and complete. In other regions, the Knights were better able to defend themselves. In Germany, some bishops (much to the chagrin of Pope Clement) actually found the Order innocent of all charges. In England, there was so little evidence that no one was convicted of any serious crime. In Aragon, the forewarned Knights holed up in their castles and strongholds and had to be forced to surrender militarily. Some sieges dragged on for months. Despite their resistance in Aragon, the subsequent trials there revealed little concrete evidence of wrongdoing. The same could be said for Cyprus which, aside from France, contained the greatest number of Templar Knights in the world.

The fact that torture was not widely employed outside of France (it was not used in England at all) was an important element in this since the only evidence Philip could point to in France were confessions obtained under torture or the threat of torture. So flimsy were the charges even in France that the prosecution was never able to discover an idol the Templars had worshipped, despite the fact that many Templars confessed (under duress) to worshipping a carved head.

On April 3, 1312, Pope Clement V officially dissolved the Knights Templar. Except for their holdings in Iberia (to which the Pope claimed Church ownership), the Order's lands were ordered to be given over to the Knights Hospitaller. Some properties never were turned over, having been seized by secular rulers. Though successful in ridding the world of the Templars, Philip was at least thwarted in one of his main goals, obtaining their vast wealth. Though he still coveted the Templar lands and resisted this portion of the papal edict, most did eventually end up in Hospitaller hands though they had to pay the French government large sums of money to gain what the Pope had already decreed was theirs.

The remaining members of the Order entered obscurity. Those that survived prison were pensioned off using former Templar holdings to fund their incomes. In some areas (most notably Iberia where the Templars had helped to drive out the Muslim armies), former Templars were permitted to enter other Military Orders. The last Grand Master of the Temple was defiant in the end. Already in his seventies, Jacques de Molay had previously confessed under torture to the charges laid down by Philip. In March of 1314, he was given a choice. He could either confirm his confession or he could repudiate it. To confirm it would result in imprisonment for the rest of his life, but would certainly end his torment. To retract his confession would result in an excruciating death by burning at the stake. In a final act of defiance, Jacques de Molay and Geoffrey de Charney, the Templar Preceptor of Normandy, publicly retracted their confessions. True to his word, the king ordered their immediate execution. On a small island in the Seine near Notre Dame, both were burned alive.



Much fantasy has surrounded the Knights of the Temple of Solomon. Some of this has been spawned by their tradition of secrecy and some by the largely baseless accusations made against them. They have been characterized as a sinister secret society, harboring sorcerers and heretics and gathering and maintaining secret, blasphemous knowledge. There is no evidence supporting this and it is not the author's intent to promote such fantasy within the context of *Call of Cthulhu*. The reader is encouraged to do a little outside study on the Order (several sources are listed in the bibliography) and decide how the Templars may fit into his or her respective game or campaign.

Myths, Mysteries, & Legends of the Templar

Many stories, some of which have are rooted in fact, surround the mysterious Knights of the Temple. These legends have provided ample fodder for writers and storytellers the world over.

The Curse of Jacques de Molay

The final demise of the last Grand Master has been well documented and was described previously. However, there is an unconfirmed story detailing the final moments of his life. As the fires were lit beneath him, some claimed that he continued to state his innocence. Further, he denounced both Philip IV of France and Pope Clement V and cursed them to God. The curse was that both would join him within the year before the throne of God to answer for their crimes against the Order. In fact, both men did die within a year. Clement succumbed to a lingering illness the next month and in November, Philip died of a strange seizure while hunting.

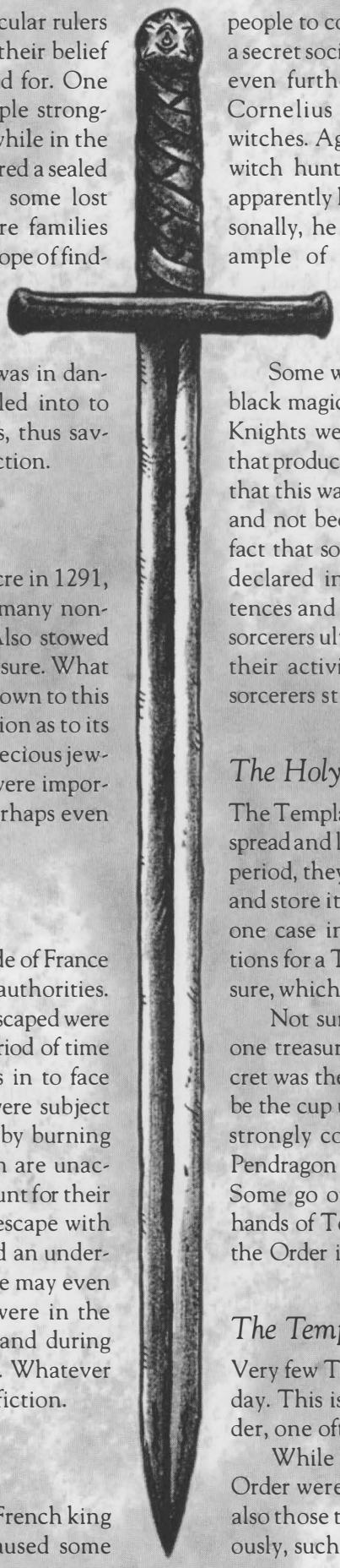
The Templar Fleet

La Rochelle is a port city on the western coast of France and was home to a substantial Templar fleet. Legend has it that this fleet sailed from La Rochelle before the authorities could seize it. The potential for wealth on board these ships was great. Strangely, the Templar ships were never seen again. Historians are unsure as to whether this legend has any validity.

The Templar Treasure

Templar wealth was truly vast and it is this wealth that helped promote their downfall. While in reality most of their riches have probably long since

vanished into the coffers of various secular rulers and Church officials, some persist in their belief that there are funds still unaccounted for. One example is the hilltop site of a Temple stronghold in Spain. Earlier in this century while in the process of digging a well, a man discovered a sealed subterranean chamber. It contained some lost Templar gold. Within months, entire families showed up to begin excavating in the hope of finding treasure. The Spanish government eventually had to seal off the site because the hill was so honeycombed with tunnels that the castle was in danger of collapsing. Engineers were called into to reinforce the hill with concrete posts, thus saving the historic structure from destruction.



The Treasure of Acre

In the final moments of the siege of Acre in 1291, the Templars loaded a ship with as many noncombatants as they possibly could. Also stowed aboard this vessel was the Temple treasure. What this exactly consisted of remains unknown to this day, but there has been much speculation as to its nature. Aside from gold, silver, and precious jewels, some have speculated that there were important holy relics with the treasure...perhaps even the Holy Grail itself.

The Missing Templars

Not surprisingly, many Templars outside of France fled rather than be arrested by local authorities. Others escaped captivity. Those who escaped were excommunicated and were given a period of time in which they could turn themselves in to face trial. Once this period lapsed, they were subject to immediate execution as heretics (by burning at the stake). To this day, these men are unaccounted for. Many theories try to account for their ultimate fate: that they were able to escape with considerable wealth, that they formed an underground secret society (that some argue may even persist today), and even that some were in the service of Robert the Bruce of Scotland during his struggle with the English in 1314. Whatever their fate, it is excellent material for fiction.

Sorcery

The charges laid against them by the French king and their policy of secrecy have caused some people to conclude that the Templars were really a secret society of sorcerers. These charges gained even further fame when in later generations, Cornelius Agrippa likened the Templars to witches. Agrippa was, of course, caught up in the witch hunting hysteria of his day and while he apparently had nothing against the Templars personally, he found it easy to cite them as an example of people drawn away from Christ. Agrippa's statements did much to help the Templar legend become firmly linked to sorcery.

Some who believe that the Order dabbled in black magic have gone so far as to claim that the Knights were in command of powerful magicks that produced practical results. They go on to state that this was the real reason they were suppressed and not because of their wealth or politics. The fact that so many Templars either escaped, were declared innocent, or served their prison sentences and were released meant that some of the sorcerers ultimately remained at large to continue their activities. Could the descendents of such sorcerers still maintain a dark heritage?

The Holy Grail

The Templar presence in the Holy Land was widespread and lasted nearly two centuries. During that period, they were able to accumulate great wealth and store it in any number of sites. There is even one case in which workers digging the foundations for a Templar castle unearthed ancient treasure, which was used to help finance the structure.

Not surprisingly, some have speculated that one treasure the Order discovered and kept secret was the Holy Grail. The Grail is supposed to be the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper. It is strongly connected with the legend of Arthur Pendragon and the Knights of the Round Table. Some go on to say that the Grail is still in the hands of Templar descendents despite the fall of the Order in the fourteenth century.

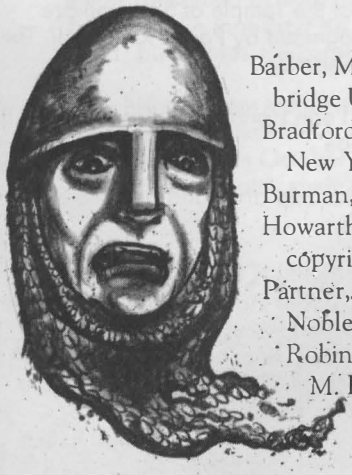
The Templar Archives

Very few Templar documents or records exist today. This is one of the great mysteries of the Order, one often overlooked or ignored by writers.

While it is plain that most members of the Order were illiterate or semi-literate, there were also those that kept the day to day records. Obviously, such records were required in an organiza-

tion that had among its most important functions banking and finance.

The actual fate of the archives is probably mundane. With the fall of the Order, the archives were likely transferred into the hands of the Knights Hospitaller. When Cyprus fell to the Turks in 1571, the archives were probably still there and were burned. While most Hospitaller records survive to this day, their records from Cyprus are absent. This is additional evidence that records from both orders that were on Cyprus were destroyed by the Turks.



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Of course, there are some who have put forth more sinister theories. Some hold that the records are kept in secret at some unknown location, perhaps valuable due to their magical or alchemical content. A few even have suggested that the records of both the Templars and Hospitallers were taken from Cyprus (either by the Turks or by someone else before 1571) and are now housed in some dusty government archive in Europe or the Middle East.

What few Templar records that exist are those that pertained directly to the Hospitallers and were, therefore, in Hospitaller hands. These are mundane documents, but do prove that the Templars did keep written records.

Baphomet

Among the many charges levelled at the Order by Philip IV was idolatry. Confessions obtained through torture indicated that the Knights were required to worship and venerate a carved wooden head (a minority stated it was a black cat). Some described it as being the head of a woman and others that it was a bearded man. Commonly, the name "Baphomet" was applied to it.

The origins of the "demon" Baphomet are linguistically and theologically tied to Mohammed. This great Islamic prophet was perceived in Christian Europe as being the Devil on Earth and soon the demon Baphomet entered Christian tradition.

Of course, in *Call of Cthulhu*, there could be all sorts of sinister implications in this. Could it have actually have been the head of the Black Pharaoh? Perhaps it represented some non-Mythos threat. Regardless, no one ever was able to find such a carven head, despite the allegation that one was at every significant Templar site. What would be the implication if such a head were to turn up in 1920s London?

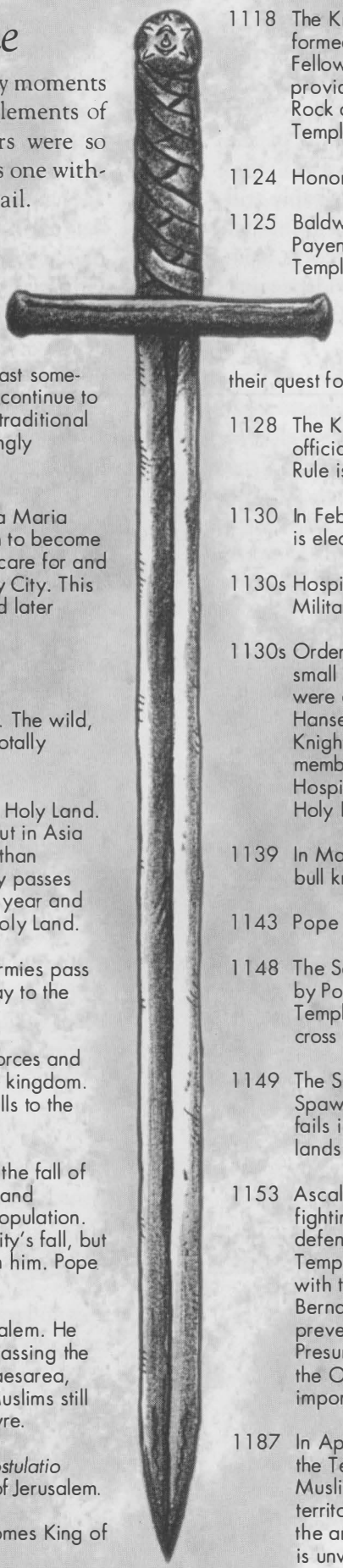
The Templar Legacy

In the past two centuries, a number of organizations have claimed to be some kind of idealistic or even literal descendents of the Templars. The Freemasons are one such group. Some claim to maintain rites and traditions of the extinct order while others go so far as to state that are the true descendents of the Knights.

There is little evidence supporting such claims. Some studies of the Templars don't even bother to mention such connections. However, for the purposes of *Call of Cthulhu*, there may be some merit to this.

Templar Timeline

This timeline contains many of the key moments in Templar history as well as a few elements of Hospitaller history. The two Orders were so closely related that it is hard to discuss one without mentioning the other in some detail.



Year Event and Significance

1071 Prior to 1071, Jerusalem is in Byzantine hands. In 1071, Muslim forces wrest control of the Holy City from the Byzantines. Although they are at least somewhat tolerant of the Christians and continue to permit Christian access to the city, traditional pilgrimage routes become increasingly dangerous to employ.

1080 An annex to the monastery of Santa Maria Latina in Jerusalem is formed. Soon to become known as the Hospital, it provides care for and aid to Christian pilgrims in the Holy City. This is the peaceful origin of what would later become the Knights Hospitaller.

1088 Urban II is elected Pope.

1095 Urban II launches the First Crusade. The wild, enthusiastic response to his call is totally unanticipated.

1096 The Christian armies depart for the Holy Land. The "People's Crusade" is wiped out in Asia Minor after killing more Christians than Muslims. The first professional army passes through Constantinople later in the year and begins an overland march to the Holy Land.

1097 Two more professional Crusader armies pass through Constantinople on their way to the Holy Land.

1098 In April, Edessa falls to Crusader forces and becomes an independent Christian kingdom. In June, the great city of Antioch falls to the Crusaders.

1099 The First Crusade ends in July with the fall of Jerusalem. Crusaders sack the city and massacre the Muslim and Jewish population. Pope Urban II dies soon after the city's fall, but before news of the event can reach him. Pope Paschal II is elected.

1100 Baldwin I is crowned King of Jerusalem. He extends control to an area encompassing the ports and cities of Sidon, Arsuf, Caesarea, Azotus, and Acre. However, the Muslims still maintain control of Ascalon and Tyre.

1113 Pope Paschal II issues the bull *Pie postulatio voluntaris* recognizing the Hospital of Jerusalem.

1118 Baldwin I dies and Baldwin II becomes King of Jerusalem. Pope Paschal II dies.

1118 The Knights of the Temple of Solomon are formed. Initially, they call themselves the "Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Jesus Christ." Baldwin II provides them a building near the Dome of the Rock on what is believed to be the site of the Temple of Solomon.

1124 Honorius II is elected Pope.

1125 Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, grants Hugh de Payens the title of "Grand Master of the Temple."

1126 Two Templar Knights visit Bernard de Clairvaux in France and gain his support in their quest for papal recognition of their Order.

1128 The Knights of the Temple of Solomon are officially recognized by Pope Honorius II. The Rule is established.

1130 In February, Pope Honorius II dies. Innocent II is elected Pope.

1130s Hospitallers take up arms and become a Military Order.

1130s Order of St. Lazarus is founded. This was a small Military Order that accepted Knights that were afflicted with leprosy (today known as Hansen's Disease). Both healthy and leprous Knights were in the Order and they accepted members from both the Templars and Hospitallers. They took part in combat in the Holy Land, usually in concert with the Templars.

1139 In March, Pope Innocent II issues the papal bull known as *Omne Datum Optimum*.

1143 Pope Innocent II dies.

1148 The Second Crusade begins and is sanctioned by Pope Eugenius III. It is at this point that the Templars adopt the distinctive eight pointed red cross that they wear on their white mantles.

1149 The Second Crusade ends in disaster. Spawned by the desire to recapture Edessa, it fails in this nor does it seize any comparable lands in order to offset its loss.

1153 Ascalon falls to Christian forces. During fighting for a breach in the city's main defensive wall, the Grand Master of the Templars, Bernard de Trémélai, is killed along with thirty nine Knights. Later it is shown that Bernard led an assault through the breach and prevented reinforcements from coming in. Presumably, this was an attempt on his part for the Order to be the sole conquerors of the important city.

1187 In April, Gerard de Ridefort, Grand Master of the Temple, orders a rash attack on a huge Muslim force moving through Christian held territory. The Muslims were travelling through the area under treaty and de Ridefort's attack is unwarranted. 130 of the 133 Templars

involved died (apparently after exacting a heavy toll on their enemies), but de Ridefort escapes. The incident unites the otherwise disunited Christians, but also spawns open conflict with Saladin.

1187 In July, the Battle of Hattin occurs. The combined Christian forces depart from strong positions to attempt to relieve the besieged city of Tiberias. Saladin's army encircles them on July 4. The resulting battle ends with the wholesale decimation of the Christian army. Some mounted forces including a few Templars escape, but the vast majority are killed or captured. Over one hundred Templars and Hospitallers are captured and later beheaded in the presence of Saladin. The rest of the prisoners are either ransomed or sold into slavery. 230 Templars die that day; de Ridefort is captured, but avoids execution.

1187 After his victory at Hattin, Saladin seizes most remaining Christian cities and strongholds. Jerusalem falls on October 2. Only Tyre and a string of strongholds south of Tripoli remain in Christian hands.

1187 In October, prior to news of Jerusalem's fall, Pope Gregory VIII appeals for a Third Crusade.

1188 Gerard de Ridefort is released from captivity after he orders Templar Knights holding a castle at Gaza to surrender.

1189 Once again, de Ridefort is captured, this time during an attempt to retake Acre. He apparently dies in prison some years later.

1189 Saladin falls ill and falls back to rest. This releases the stranglehold on the Christians.

1189 Richard Cœur de Lion (the Lionheart) becomes King of England.

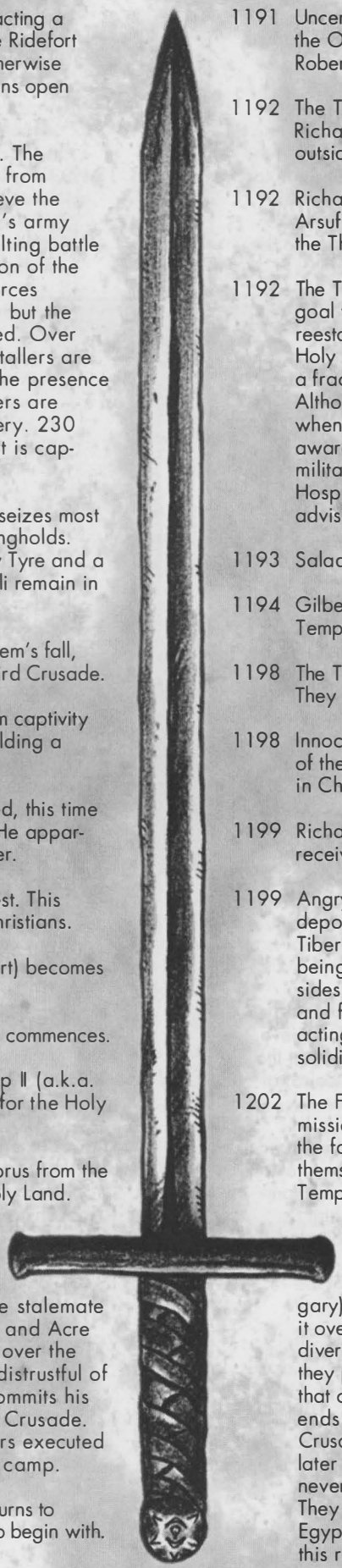
1189 After much delay, the Third Crusade commences.

1190 King Richard of England and Philip II (a.k.a. Philip Augustus) of France depart for the Holy Land.

1191 Richard the Lionheart captures Cyprus from the Byzantines while enroute to the Holy Land.

1191 Richard and Philip arrive in the Holy Land and join the siege of Acre. A no nonsense leader, Richard quickly breaks the stalemate that has been running for months and Acre falls. Impatient over negotiations over the release of Muslim prisoners and distrustful of Saladin to begin with, Richard commits his single most despicable act of the Crusade. He has all 2,700 Muslim prisoners executed in full view of the nearby Muslim camp.

1191 Soon after the fall of Acre, Philip returns to France. He never wanted to come to begin with.



1191 Uncertain over the fate of Gerard de Ridefort, the Order finally elects a new Grand Master, Robert de Sablé.

1192 The Templars purchase Cyprus from King Richard. It becomes their most important base outside the Holy Land.

1192 Richard defeats Saladin in a battle outside Arsuf. This is considered his best moment in the Third Crusade.

1192 The Third Crusade ends. Although it fails in its goal to retake Jerusalem, it does succeed in reestablishing the Christian presence in the Holy Land for another century (though at only a fraction of the size it possessed at its zenith). Although criticized for not taking the Holy City when the opportunity existed, Richard was aware that it was indefensible. At a moment of military pragmatism, both the Templars and the Hospitallers agreed with his reasoning and advised a halt to the advance.

1193 Saladin and de Sablé both die of illness.

1194 Gilbert Erail becomes Grand Master of the Templar Order.

1198 The Teutonic Knights become a Military Order. They establish themselves at Acre.

1198 Innocent III is elected Pope. He becomes one of the most powerful and memorable pontiffs in Church history.

1199 Richard the Lionheart dies in France of wounds received in battle.

1199 Angry over confusion concerning money deposited to the Templars, the Bishop of Tiberias excommunicates the Order despite being paid in full. Pope Innocent III quickly sides with the Templars, rebukes the bishop, and forbids any clerical authority from ever acting against the Templars again. This further solidifies Templar power.

1202 The Fourth Crusade begins. Ostensibly, its mission is to liberate Egypt from Islam. Once the forces have gathered in Venice, they find themselves without adequate funds, despite Templar financial backing. The Venetians agree to provide funding if only the Crusaders seize the Dalmatian port of Zara for them (which is Christian and is ruled by the Christian King of Hungary). They duly seize and sack Zara and give it over to Venice. The Doge of Venice then diverts the Crusaders to Constantinople which they proceed to sack in an orgy of violence that continues for days. The Fourth Crusade ends with only Christians dying and not one Crusader ever reaches a Muslim shore. Only later does it become known that the Venetians never intended to send the Crusaders to Egypt. They maintained profitable trade ties with Egypt and a Crusade there would have upset this relationship.

1209 The Albigensian Crusade commences. The object is to suppress heretics in southern France. It is brutally efficient and Templars are among the crusading forces. When asked how one was to distinguish a heretic from an innocent Christian, the papal legate responds by saying "Kill all of them; God will know his own." In the aftermath of these two brutal crusades, Templar recruitment falters. Many secular knights who might have gone to the Holy Land see riches and glory to be won nearer to home yet still be in the service of the Church.

1216 Pope Innocent III dies.

1217 The Damietta Crusade begins. It is an attempt to subjugate the Nile Valley to the Christians.

1218 Castle Pilgrim is built. It is the strongest of any Templar castle and never falls to an enemy attack. After the fall of the last Christian city in the Holy Land in 1291, the Templars evacuate it.

1219 In August, William de Chartres, Grand Master of the Temple, dies of wounds suffered in battle. In November, after sixty two weeks of fighting, Damietta finally falls to the Crusade.

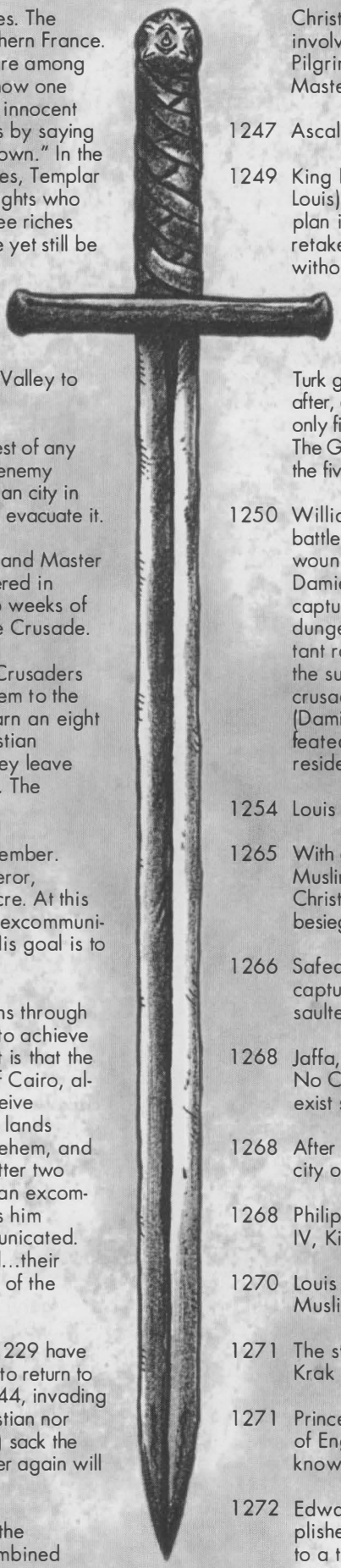
1221 While advancing up the Nile, the Crusaders suffer a great defeat. This forces them to the bargaining table. The Christians earn an eight year treaty with Egypt and all Christian hostages are released. In return, they leave Egypt and Damietta is surrendered. The Damietta Crusade ends.

1228 Frederick's Crusade begins in September. Forces under the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II (Barbarossa) land in Acre. At this time, Frederick is under the ban of excommunication so cannot legally crusade. His goal is to retake Jerusalem.

1229 Fighting is indecisive. Frederick wins through diplomacy what many have failed to achieve through brute force. The agreement is that the Christians will support the Sultan of Cairo, al-Kamal. In return, the Christians receive Nazareth and the western Galilee, lands around Sidon, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and a land corridor running from the latter two cities to the coast. Frederick is still an excommunicate so when Jerusalem allows him entrance, the entire city is excommunicated. The Templars are less than pleased...their entire Temple area (near the Dome of the Rock) remains in Muslim hands.

1244 Treaties signed with the Muslims in 1229 have permitted Templars and Hospitallers to return to Jerusalem. However, on July 11, 1244, invading Khwarismians (who are neither Christian nor Muslim and apparently lack religion) sack the city and force both Orders out. Never again will the Templars return to the Holy City.

1244 In a battle near Gaza in October, the Khwarismians soundly defeat a combined Christian-Egyptian army. Of 300 Templars involved, only 39 survive to return to Castle Pilgrim. Among the dead is their Grand Master, Armand de Peragors.



1247 Ascalon falls to the Muslims.

1249 King Louis IX of France (later to become Saint Louis) leads a crusade to liberate Egypt. The plan is to take Cairo and then proceed to retake Ascalon. Damietta falls quickly and without a fight.

1249 The Egyptian Sultan Fakhr ad-Din is killed by the Templars. Baibars, a superb Mameluke Turk general, replaces the fallen Sultan. Soon after, at fighting in the walled town of Mansourah, only five out of a force of 290 Templars survive. The Grand Master, William de Somnac, is one of the five, but loses an eye to an arrow.

1250 William de Somnac loses his other eye in battle outside Mansourah and dies of the wound. The Christian army retreats toward Damietta, but none make it. All die or are captured; Louis IX ends up in a Muslim dungeon. The Templars help pay the exorbitant ransom to win the release of Louis IX and the surviving captured crusaders. Louis' crusade ends with nothing to show for it (Damietta is retaken by the Muslims). Defeated, Louis IX moves to Acre and takes up residence at Castle Pilgrim.

1254 Louis IX departs the Holy Land.

1265 With a peace treaty with Cairo now expired, Muslims from Egypt renew their attack on Christians in the Holy Land. Castle Pilgrim is besieged but holds out. Caesarea and Haifa fall.

1266 Safed falls to the Muslims. All Templars captured there are beheaded. Acre is assaulted, but holds out.

1268 Jaffa, Banyas, and Beaufort fall to the Muslims. No Christian holdings except Castle Pilgrim exist south of Acre.

1268 After 171 years in Christian hands, the great city of Antioch falls to the forces of Islam.

1268 Philip the Fair is born. Later, he becomes Philip IV, King of France.

1270 Louis IX of France travels to Tunisia to war on Muslims there. He dies of a fever at Carthage.

1271 The strongest Hospitaller castle, the famous Krak des Chevaliers, falls to Muslim forces.

1271 Prince Edward (later to become King Edward I of England) lands at Acre and begins what is known as the Crusade of Edward of England.

1272 Edward's Crusade ends with little accomplished. The Egyptian Sultan, Baibars agrees to a ten year truce.

1277 Baibars dies.

1285 Philip IV (the Fair) becomes King of France.

1285 The great Hospitaller fortress of Margat falls to Muslim forces. Survivors are permitted to evacuate to Tripoli.

1289 Though Tripoli is technically under protection of a truce, the Sultan of Egypt, Qalawun, is able to violate it, citing that Christian representatives invited him in. William de Beaujeu, Grand Master of the Temple, learns of Qalawun's true intentions and attempts to warn the people of Tripoli. He is ignored and even scoffed at. Soon after, Tripoli falls to a massive Muslim siege. Qalawun claims this is an exception and that the peace treaty still applies to other Christian holdings. Trade resumes between Christians and Muslims.

1290 A minor incident between a Christian and a Muslim in Acre erupts into a riot. The Egyptians begin to mobilize, ostensibly to campaign south of Egypt. William de Beaujeu once again learns of Qalawun's intentions and warns the people of Acre. Again, he is ignored and scoffed at. Qalawun dies before he can launch his offensive. His son takes up where his father left off and carries on with the plan to assail Acre.

1291 The offensive against Acre commences in March. Non-combatants are evacuated to Cyprus and those remaining unite for the common defense. A force of Templars that sallies out in a nighttime raid is almost completely wiped out; Hospitallers trying the same tactic a few nights later also suffer defeat. William de Beaujeu dies of an arrow wound while defending a breach in the city wall. Hospitaller Grand Master John de Villiers is seriously wounded in the fighting and is one of only a handful of Hospitallers evacuated from the city. On May 18, all Acre falls except the Templar's castle. The treasure of the Temple plus some of the non-combatants are evacuated by ship from the castle. On May 28, the Temple of Acre falls. None of the Templars remaining there survive. All that remains of Christian holdings are Sidon, Beirut, Haifa, Tortosa, and Castle Pilgrim. All these are soon either surrendered or abandoned. Castle Pilgrim is the last, evacuated on August 14.

1291 Tibaud de Gaudin becomes the last Grand Master of the Order who still commands forces in the Holy Land. He is elected while still in Sidon, but soon evacuates along with the rest of the Templars.

1293 Tibaud de Gaudin dies. Jacques de Molay becomes the last Grand Master of the Knights of the Temple of Solomon.

1303 Pope Boniface VIII writes a bull that will excommunicate Philip IV and the entire country of France. Philip kidnaps Boniface before the bull can be published (Boniface's Templar guards are unable to stop Philip's troops). The incident occurs in Anagni, a town near Rome. The outraged people of Anagni rescue the 86 year old pontiff from the French troops. The stress was too much for him; a month later, Boniface VIII dies. The bull is never issued.

1303 Benedict XI is elected Pope. Though he is supposed to be pro-French, he refuses to impeach his predecessor despite the demands of Philip IV. He goes on to condemn Philip's actions at Anagni.

1304 Pope Benedict XI is poisoned, some say at Philip's order. The election process for a new pontiff drags on for a year.

1305 Clement V is elected Pope, partly through the influence of Philip IV.

1306 Philip IV orders the mass arrest of all Jews in France. They are expelled from the country "forever" and their property is confiscated. ("Forever" turns out to be only nine years. In 1315, the Jews are called back to France by Philip's successor.)

1307 The Knights Hospitaller land on Byzantine-controlled Rhodes and begin a campaign to seize the island.

1307 On Friday, October 13, the Templars in France are arrested by King Philip IV. They are charged with heresy.

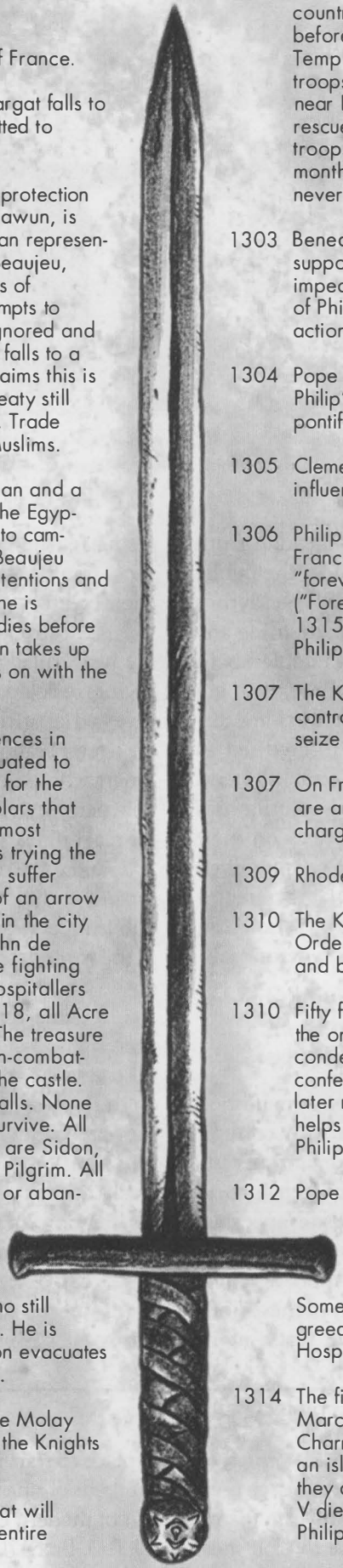
1309 Rhodes falls to the Knights Hospitaller.

1310 The Knights Hospitaller officially move their Order's headquarters from Cyprus to Rhodes and begin to amass a naval force.

1310 Fifty four Templars are burned at the stake at the order of Philip IV of France. They are condemned as "relapsed heretics" (people who confessed that they were heretics and then later recanted their confessions). The incident helps cripple the Templar defense against Philip's charges.

1312 Pope Clement V abolishes the Knights Templars. He orders that their property be handed over to the Knights Hospitaller except for lands in Iberia to which the Church retains possession. Some Templar property is scouped up by greedy secular monarchs and never enters Hospitaller hands.

1314 The final chapter closes on the Order. In March, Jacques de Molay and Geoffrey de Charney publicly recant their confessions. On an island in the Seine near the Notre Dame, they are burned at the stake. In April, Clement V dies of a long running illness. In November, Philip IV dies of a seizure while hunting.



Zines and the Mythos

BY JAMES D. THOMAS

The Mythos is out there—that dreadful truth admits no doubt. Why, then, does the public not know? The slimy tentacles of the Mythos reach deep into the mainstream media, muffling any mention. A few brave tabloids dare mumble about some small corner of the truth; but these, too, are within reach of manipulation. Their efforts are distorted into cartoonish parodies and discredited as "anti-scientific" by the Mythos-tainted establishment.

Recently, the desktop publishing revolution has allowed individuals to produce publications on their own. Now, finally, lone voices can be heard unmuffled by corporate meddling: iconoclasts howling, screaming the *truth* through the roaring winds of isolation and desperation. Such independent, idiosyncratic self-publications are called zines.

The Zine Revolution

There are thousands of small, independently published zines floating around the edges of mainstream culture. They cover every imaginable area of human interest. A random sampling from *Factsheet Five* (a magazine of zine reviews) pulls up zines about Disneyana, music, life as a teenage punk girl in the suburbs, tattoo culture, thrift-shopping lore, collecting rubber stamps, and a journal of nomadic societies. Many of these zines are crudely produced, and few of them reach more than a few hundred readers. Hardly any make money; most don't break even. They are a labor of love for their creators.

As in any medium with no outside filter, many zines are junk, filled with the poorly written and unedited ravings of deluded paranoids, bitter loners, and revenge-obsessed fanatics. But, in this great turbulent mass, there are a few paranoids who they really are out to get, a few loners whose isolation gives them a unique and valuable perspective, and a few fanatics who seek revenge for real crimes against all mankind.

And some of these people write about the Mythos, directly or indirectly. Here are a few of the zines they publish. Each zine listing contains a brief description of the contents of the zine, an excerpt, a sample review of the zine, the real story behind it, and game stats.

In game terms, these zines are much less potent than traditional Mythos texts. They are not meant to fill the same role, that of advancing the investigators on the path of Mythos knowledge and insanity. Rather, they are meant as tools for the Keeper: to serve as inspiration for how the Mythos subtly infiltrates tiny cracks in our culture, to serve as sources of needed clues, information, or scenario hooks, and to add a realistic modern flavor to the game. As zines are serial publications like magazines, both the sanity lost and the knowledge gained as a result of reading a zine should be spread across a few issues, as judged by the Keeper.

Factsheet Five

For further information on the real world of zines, the best place to start is *Factsheet Five*, a near-comprehensive review of the current zine scene. Each issue reviews hundreds of zines. From there, one can seek out zines of interest to better get a feel for this diverse manifestation of modern culture. *Factsheet Five* is available at some bookstores, or for $6/$20 payable to "Factsheet Five", P.O. Box 170099, San Francisco, CA 94117

Waves Wash Over Me

Waves Wash Over Me is a personal zine published by Jonathan Sporn. Jonathan talks about his life, from growing up as an adopted child in a farm family in eastern Colorado to his running away to Boston as a teenager ("I had to be close to the sea") and his current life working as a guide on a whale-watching boat. Occasionally he will put in a piece of news relating to the sea, but mostly he concentrates on original essays dealing with his favorite topics: the beauty and mystery of the sea, and his sense of alienation from humanity.

Excerpt: "I wish I could explain to you the rapture I felt upon first seeing the sea. I feel for those who grow up near the sea and take it for granted; I feel for those who grow up inland and never see it. It was like returning to the mother I never had."

Review: "*Waves Wash Over Me* is an earnest personazine from Jonathan Sporn. Sometimes it's interesting, and Jon seems like an earnest guy, but enough about the sea already. We're gonna have to invent a whole new category of sexual deviancy just so Jonathan and the sea can live happily ever after in it."

The Truth: Jonathan is a Deep One/human hybrid who has only recently begun the slow process of metamorphosis. When he was an infant, his real parents were killed in a car accident and he was put up for adoption, eventually joining a family in Colorado. He still has no idea of his true heritage and thinks his profound sense of alienation is a result of his antisocial personality. As time goes on, his slow transformation will make him less and less fit for society; this will be reflected in his zine.

Stats: Sporn, Jonathan. *Waves Wash Over Me*. Spornography Press. Irregularly published (roughly 3 issues per year) since 1993. No Sanity loss.

Moonless Dreams

Moonless Dreams is a zine of poetry, all written by a teenaged girl named Hannah Spooner. Thematically, it meanders between mood pieces describing her bizarre dreams, longing poems about an unnamed black man who seems to be some sort of fantasy lover, witty verse mocking her family and schoolmates, and lots of poems about cats. The quality of the poetry varies widely; some of it is forced and overstuffed with adjectives, but much of it (especially the dream poetry) is mesmerizing, densely layered lyric.

Excerpt:

I stand alone at the shore
Naked and trembling as a whore
Waiting for his ebon hand
To take me to land

Review: "As if we need another lonely cat-loving woman writing poetry. Well, some of the poetry in "Moonless Dreams" makes the cliché all worthwhile. Vivid and rich, it wraps around you like a childhood-fantasy blanket on a stormy night and drags you down into oblivion. We could live without all the cat poems, though."

The Truth: Hanna Spooner spends a lot of time in the Dreamlands; much of her poetry is her attempt to put down on paper her experiences. Fortunately, she is blessed with enough lyrical depth to pull it off, for the most part. She is not aware of the real nature of the Dreamlands.

Stats: Spooner, Hannah. *Moonless Dreams*. Very irregularly published (1-5 issues per year) for the past two years. +1 Cthulhu Mythos, 0/1 Sanity loss, +1D3 Dream Lore.

Veritas Patitur

the truth endures

Veritas Patitur, or *The Truth Endures*, is a zine written by a former FBI lab technician named Janet Capelli. It is devoted to how much influence a group Janet refers to as "The Cult" has over the federal government. To this end, Janet prints news stories, interviews with disaffected employees, and recently declassified documents, all with her commentaries on how each piece fits into the puzzle of the big conspiracy. Each issue starts with a page where Janet explains that she worked for the FBI until she found out too much. They attempted to silence her, and when that didn't work they harassed and fired her. But, she explains, they can't stop her from writing.

Excerpt: "The alleged Roswell crash is a straw man, a wild goose, planted by the FBI to get the curious looking in areas where they can't do any harm. The real aliens are alive, and walking around in suits in Virginia with government I.D."

Review: "Aliens infiltrating the FBI? Strange orgiastic cults in charge of the Treasury? Ancient monsters manipulating the government? Bring it on, baby. This stuff makes the black helicopters look like the neighborhood ice cream truck! A crazy cocktail of Phillip K. Dick and Robert Anton Wilson, shaken over the crushed ice of an ex-insider."

The Truth: Janet really did work for the FBI, and really did accidentally open the wrong filing cabinet. What she discovered motivated her to investigate further. She was soon discovered and fired, her taxes audited and her credit rating destroyed. Denied access to official sources, she continues to scour unofficial ones for evidence of the conspiracy she uncovered. About a third of the time, she reveals some kernel of truth; the other two-thirds is wild speculation.

Stats: Capelli, Janet. *Veritas Patitur*. Published six times a year like clockwork since 1991. No Sanity loss.

CHANCRE

Chancre, claims its editor Nathan Doherty, prints horror fiction that "makes even horror writers afraid to turn off the lights." Unfortunately, it usually only succeeds in printing horror fiction that makes other editors afraid to read it because it's so bad.

Excerpt: "Julie stood before the thing she had known as her boyfriend, as something from within emerged, tentacle by tentacle, through wet sucking perforations until all the recognizably human anatomy fell away like a husk, revealing a collaboration of fungal growths so horrid she forgot how to scream."

Review: "Highly spotty horror fiction. There is the occasional gem, but how many tentacles-ripping-some-poor-guy-apart stories do you want to wade through until you get to the good ones?"

The Truth: Nathan is just a normal horror fan who wants his zine to live on the cutting edge. He is well-known among aspiring horror authors as someone who will look at fiction other editors won't touch. As a result, sometimes he gets stuff that is Mythos-inspired or influenced, but you do have to wade through a lot of crap to find it.

Stats: Ruiz, Nathan, ed. *Chancre*. Bloody Drill Press. Published quarterly since 1989. +1 Cthulhu Mythos, 0/1D3 Sanity loss.

Tlg'manh is written entirely by Joel Nguen of the Mendota Mental Health facility in Madison, Wisconsin. In it, he crudely hand-writes and draws little plays, sermons, descriptions—anything that comes to mind. The tone of his writing veers abruptly from childlike wonder to gushing violence to raw incomprehensibility as he discusses fevered obedience to strange gods and funny angles. It's obvious that he's stark raving mad. Joel explains that he named his zine *Tlg'manh* after the name that the crickets call him when they explain things to him. The zine is printed and distributed by Arthur Tempy, a psychiatry intern who has a great interest in outsider art; Joel mails him his ravings and Arthur does his best to make them presentable.

Excerpt: "Why can't everyone else be like me? Suckling, suckling! That's why. Can't have too much muckled suckling. They will need cattle, food, bolognese for their pasta of the vast life-sustaining forests. That's what everyone else, all the turgidified wetsack blinders are for."

Review: "I'm sure glad this guy is off the street. We spent an hour trying to figure out what he was saying just on the first friggin' page. Still, how can you not like a guy who uses phrases like "schrammulous enemetrious intestine" and gives advice like, "don't take your pineal gland for granted. Pamper it! Essential oils! Rubdowns! It could save your ass someday." Cute drawings, too, if you like kindergarten stick-figure renditions of Gigereque-style horrific imagery."

The Truth: Joel was a grad student at the University of Wisconsin who dabbled in the wrong kind of forbidden knowledge and went nuts. The authorities blamed it on LSD, but it was the Mythos. Now, Joel sits in Mendota and scribbles all day. The staff thinks it might be good for him and allows it to be published. Although this zine contains much material openly evocative of the Mythos, Joel is too far gone to express anything in a coherent way. Any conclusions reached by readers are more likely to be the result of self-deception rather than real insight into Joel's madness.

Stats: Nguen, Joel. *Tlg'manh*. Published by Arthur Tempy. Very irregularly published (1-5 issues per year) for the last two years. +1 (maybe) Cthulhu Mythos, 0/1 Sanity loss.

Dead Serious

Dead Serious is a campy zine published by morticians for morticians. It consists mostly of clinically graphic photos of corpses, together with cute captions in what can only be described charitably as 'mortician humor.' However, each issue also contains a column (written by the editor, Harold Dupor) discussing recent trends in bizarre deaths as observed by morticians. Most of the data is anecdotally gathered; readers of the zine send in short descriptions of bizarre deaths they've examined or even just heard of.

Excerpt: "We've been seeing a lot more of these strange burns recently, especially coming out of Appalachia. Mostly they're reported as 'electrical burns', but I've seen electrical burns with causes ranging from power lines to lightning and they're nothing like this."

Review: "Not to everyone's taste, but where else are you going to find stuff like this? Pictures of guy with half his head missing with the caption "I guess this guy is going to need *extra-strength* Tylenol". Or a prolapsed rectum with the quip "I wonder how *this* guy rides a bike?" It's filled with just about every bizarre cause of death imaginable, together with humorous anecdotes and captions. Plus, the editorial column discussing causes of death is sure to be a big hit at all the parties. I guess morticians have to have something to think about while sewing corpses' lips to their gums."

The Truth: Harold is on the verge of putting together a few trends that center around the Mythos. Although Harold has no concept of the Mythos, many of the phenomena he discusses could be identified as Mythos-related by the initiated. The facts from the case studies (where these sorts of deaths are occurring, the occupations of the dead, *etc.*) provide useful if sketchy clues to Mythos activity.

Stats: Dupor, Harold, ed. *Dead Serious*. Published quarterly since 1986. 0/1 Sanity loss (from the gore).

RUSSIAN REVOLVER

Russian Revolver is a confusingly named zine full of puzzles, all created by one man. Each issue contains exactly six puzzles; most mix word games with more graphically oriented conundrums (somewhat akin to Nick Bantock's book *The Egyptian Jukebox*). All are tremendously difficult but highly intriguing.

Review: "To tell you the truth, I'm not sure how to review this zine. I tried working on some of the puzzles last night, but each time I thought I had figured one out, another level of mystery opened itself up to me. If you like puzzles, take a look—I've never seen anything like this."

The Truth: The man behind *Russian Revolver* is Daniel Babyonechev, a man driven mad by the Mythos. A promising young mathematician, his sanity was destroyed when some of his more esoteric inquiries led him to dabble in Mythos magic. Daniel's madness is not outwardly apparent; he resigned his assistant professorship to get a low-key job as a librarian. Now, he spends all his time researching the Mythos and designing puzzles about them in an odd obsession; somehow creating the puzzles lets him deal with his madness enough to function. Although he's thought a lot about it, he doesn't know exactly why he publishes the zine. He's not sure if he creates it to warn people about the Mythos, to drive others mad with his forbidden knowledge, or merely out of the natural human desire for recognition. Daniel keeps a list of his subscribers and corresponds with a few of them. He keeps special track of those who've gone mad.

The puzzles he creates are masterpieces; usually they are centered around some sort of intricate knot-like mathematical structure, but are constructed of many layers. Solving word problems are necessary to start working on the knot, and each word problem spawns another puzzle, some requiring references to medieval Kabbalah, some to other sources of mythology; the end of each stacked set of sub-puzzles usually leads to an insight into the Mythos on the part of the solver.

The name *Russian Revolver* is a play both on Daniel's Russian ancestry and on the fact that of the six puzzles in each issue, only one contains real Mythos knowledge—solving each issue is like playing a game of Russian Roulette.

(It will take an excruciatingly long time to solve enough of the puzzles to receive the gameplay effects; years of effort probably.)

Stats: Babyonechev, Daniel. *Russian Revolver*. Published three times a year since 1993. +4 Cthulhu Mythos, 1D6 Sanity loss, x2 spell multiplier. Spells: Elder Sign, Create Gate.

Basalt

Basalt is a New Age journal of spirituality. Its editor, Tanya Crescent, has conceived the mission of the zine pretty broadly. It has a few semi-scholarly articles about cults throughout history, as well as current reports on religious activity ranging from Wiccans to Kabbalists.

Excerpt: "But when one considers the modern Satanic cults in the context of the Order of the Golden Dawn, they are revealed to be the kids playing in sandboxes they really are. The Chinese death cults and their American West Coast knock-offs, well, that's another story."

Review: "A very nice zine of modern alternative religion. Most of the historical articles seem very well researched, and I like the way the authors attempt to find synergies between the various systems of belief."

The Truth: This zine is pretty much what it seems; however, some of the articles do a pretty good job of connecting the dots of Mythos cult activity without fully realizing the implications.

Stats: Crescent, Tanya, ed. *Basalt*. Basalt Press. Published quarterly since 1991. +2 Occult.

Lottery Muse

Lottery Muse isn't really a zine in the traditional sense; instead, it represents an effort by its creator, Martin Rousculp, to convince gullible astrology-loving, tabloid-reading lottery addicts to part with some of their money. Each issue contains a veritable explosion of information: references range from New Age philosophy, European Renaissance occultism, and Arabian Sahriri magick to Vedic astrology, Mayan calenders, and UFO folklore. It's all connected; there are charts and diagrams linking everything. One might find an image of the Mona Lisa imposed across the constellation of Libra, over a map of the Paris Metro, demonstrating the "astral link" between Leonardo da Vinci and the medieval architects of the first Parisian sewers, followed by a brief explanation of how it connects with Incan mounds to predict next week's lottery numbers.

Excerpt: "The important thing to remember about playing Powerball in March is that it was March who felled Caesar, and that it was Caesar who conquered Gaul and brought that offshoot of the Druids to their knees. The Roman tradition (and all its offshoots—the Cult of Mercury, the Order of the Golden Dawn, all the way up to the Rosicrucians and Freemasons) trembles at the retribution of the clockwork precision of the Druids' standing stones, and the septennial power of their solar predictions. So, bet heavy on sevens this month."

Review: "I'm breaking policy to review *Lottery Muse*. Although it's clearly intended as a money-making venture and is target-marketed at the fat women I see reading *The Weekly World News* every time I go grocery shopping, its stunning audaciousness redeems it. It's an astrology-based lottery prediction mag, but one that draws on every mystic tradition I've ever heard of and tries to shoehorn them all into *USA Today*-style graphic displays to impress white trash lottery addicts. I don't play the lottery, so I can't vouch for its usefulness as a moneymaking tool; however, the raw entertainment value of seeing a map of Elvis' moles superimposed over the trade routes of the ancient Yucatan and analyzed by an obscure Javanese version of the I Ching, all in an attempt to predict next month's lottery numbers, should not be underestimated."

The Truth: Martin is a history grad student at the University of Chicago who, like all grad students, is a little short on funds. After reading too many copies of *The Weekly World News*, he noticed several ads for newsletters claiming to predict the lottery through astrology. On a lark, he bought a few of them and found them amateurish and uninspired. He knew he could do better—not in actually predicting the lottery, of course, but in putting together a newsletter that people would believe because of the depth and obscurity in the references.

He started to do some research (his thesis work is on related topics), throwing in mystic references more for how 'cool' they seemed than any logical reason; he tried to find semi-plausible connections wherever possible, followed by a little gobbledygook connecting it to the lottery.

So far, it's been highly successful; *Lottery Muse* has provided Martin with a small but steady supplementary income. However, recently he's started getting a few strange pieces of mail. In his helter-skelter pirating of mystic references, he's accidentally hit upon a few of serious relevance to the Cthulhu Mythos (he has access to fragments of Mythos texts at the University of Chicago library). A few people in the know happened across *Lottery Muse*, and started to spread the word: Martin now has a small subscriber base of insane cultists. Some of them write him, thinking him a fellow student of the Mythos (including Daniel Babyonechev from *Russian Revolver*), trying to explain their insights and how they relate to his writings. Martin has used bits from a few of the letters, but as the collective tone of the letters gets creepier he gets more and more nervous.

As with *Russian Revolver*, whatever knowledge is embedded in *Lottery Muse* is not easy to get out—more because it's buried in so much junk than because of intentional obfuscation. It should take a few weeks or so per issue.

Stats: Rousculp, Martin. *Lottery Muse*. Published bimonthly since 1994. +1 Cthulhu Mythos (this may increase with time), 0/1D3 Sanity loss, +1 Occult.

formless darkness artlose dunkelheit

This is a bilingual German/English zine claiming to chronicle goth culture worldwide. Although it does contain occasional articles about music and fashion, its real subject matter seems to be the "Formless Darkness"—a strange depression that the medical profession refuses to recognize. Most of the pieces are rambling explanations of how hard life is with the "Formless Darkness"—friends and family don't understand, the doctors give you happy pills that don't work, the only people who sympathize with you are other goths, etc. Everything in the zine is bilingual; the editor, Joerg, gets submissions from a mix of German and English speakers, and he translates each piece as necessary.

Excerpt: "The dreams still come every night. I've been experimenting with music; I've found that some recent Bedazzled releases soothe things a little bit, but no matter what I do I always dream. I can't avoid staring across the lake at the pallid man; it's worse than staring at the abyss."

Review: "Although this zine claims to cover the world of goth culture, is really seems to be some sort of virtual support group for what its publisher calls the "Formless Darkness," a new sort of depression unrecognized by science. Most of the features are written by readers. Some describe the goth scene in various places, but most are personal testimonials about how much their lives suck: the only common thread I can identify is a love-hate relationship with lakes. I thought it was a boring downer, but it's probably a life-saver to those who feel the same way."

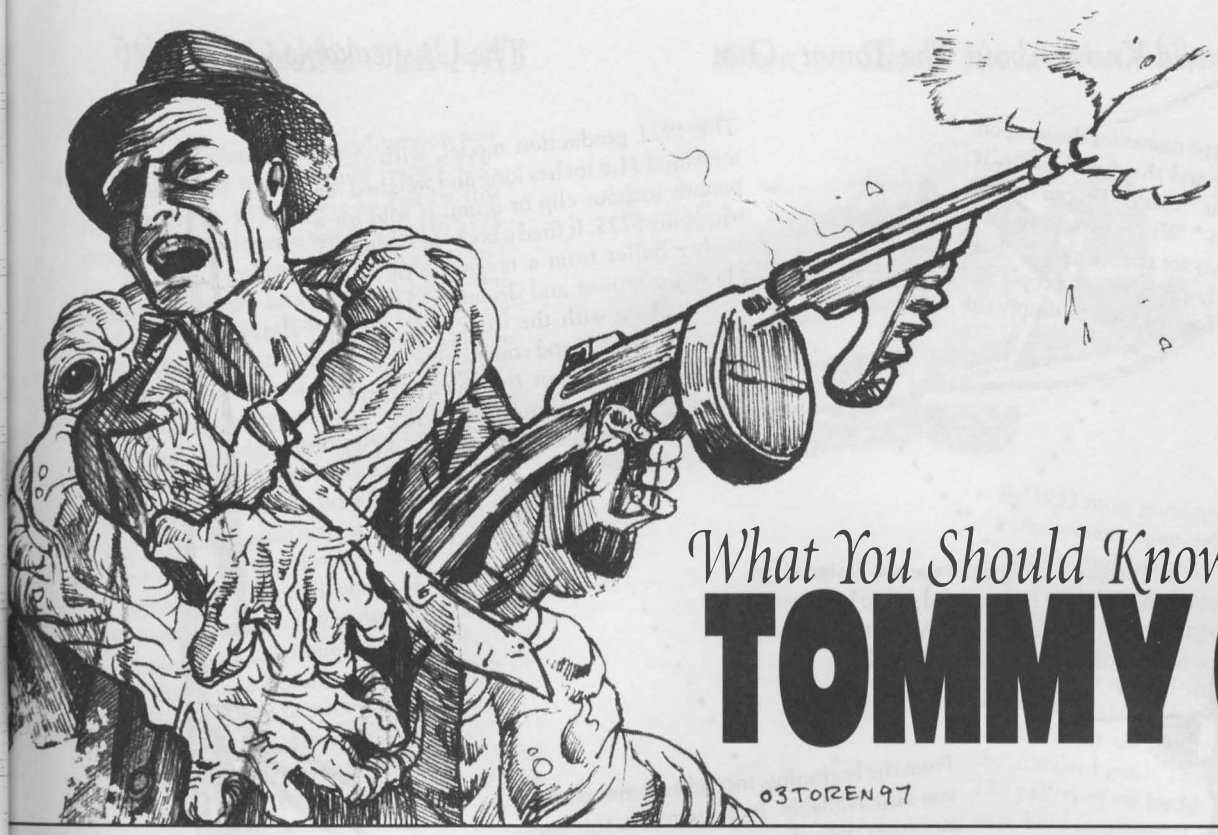
The Truth: There is a basis for the peculiar form of depression described in the zine: a German art film called *Jenseits der See*, which is a loose interpretation of *The King in Yellow* with a very loose plot structure and grainy, often out-of-focus visuals. It's not as powerful as the original stage play, but still has the power to plant the seeds of a deep melancholy of striking regularity in unstable viewers through some sort of weak connection to Hastur. Images from the movie haunt their dreams, too vague and too deep to be recognizable. All those suffering from the "Formless Darkness" have seen the movie; however, no one has made the connection yet. The effects grow slowly with time, and most of those affected were clinically depressed before they saw the film.

The movie was never commercially released, but circulated in videotape form in Germany and to a lesser extent in other European countries and North America. Most of those who saw it were depressed goths to begin with; it drove some of those over the edge. As time goes on, their connection to Hastur will grow; whether this will lead to mass suicide or a dangerous cult is an open question; whatever the outcome, this zine will likely be the catalyst.

Stats: Pfeiler, Joerg, ed. *Artlose Dunkelheit/Formless Darkness*. Published two to three times per year since 1989. 0/1 Sanity loss.

Suggested Uses

- Someone anonymously gives one of the players a subscription to *Russian Revolver*. Who? Why?
- The investigators keep running across copies of *Lottery Muse* in the apartments of those they investigate. Why?
- While reading *Veritas Patitur*, an investigator reads about a friend who he thought disappeared years ago. The friend is described as on the run, hunted by corrupt authorities. Does the investigator try to help? How?
- While in a cafe, an investigator sees an intense, suspicious-looking guy reading a strange zine with what looks like a Yellow Sign on the back cover. The zine is *Formless Darkness*. When the reader notices the investigator's attention, he gets up and hurries away. Is it the start of a conspiracy, or just a red herring?
- An investigator picks up *Waves Wash Over Me* and feels as if he's found, for the first time, a kindred spirit. What does he do?
- An investigator writes a story for *Chancre* and gets invited to the annual contributor's party. Who does he meet? What does he learn?



What You Should Know About The TOMMY GUN

by Kim Eastland

It is the one item that most symbolizes the 1920s and '30s: the Thompson Submachine Gun. Its unique roaring chatter, fire-flashing muzzle, and hanging drum of death instantly brings to mind gangsters and bank robbers, Untouchables and G-Men, the St. Valentine's Day Massacre and the original drive-by shootings. The Tommy Gun is also a favorite tool of certain CoC adventurers who prefer the more "direct" approach to dealing with the unexplainable that at least are not impenetrable. A massive stream of screaming-hot .45 caliber lead is all most gamers think of when they pick up their Thompson, but there is much more to its history than that. While the actual game mechanics of this fine submachine gun are fairly well covered in *Call of Cthulhu* 5th edition, its unusual history is barely scratched.

So, for your edification and to provide some hints which the Keeper can use to make an adventure more realistic and challenging, here is a brief list of things you should know about this American icon of the '20s & '30s.

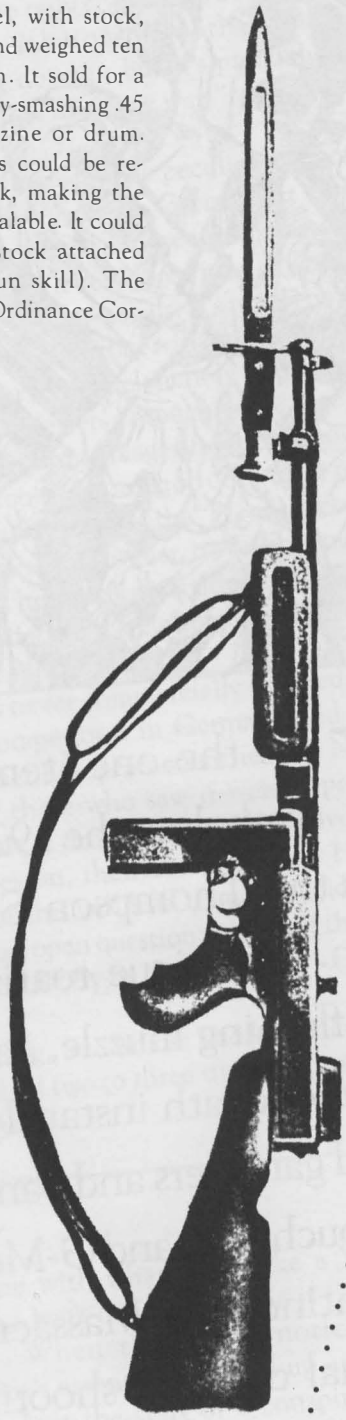
The original prototype names for the weapon were the Persuader and the Annihilator. It was advertised as the "Trench Broom" or the "Anti-Bandit Gun." While gangsters may have had nicknames for the weapon such as "typewriter" or "chopper," most people referred to it as the Tommy Gun or simply the machine gun.

The 1921 production model, with stock, measured 31.8 inches long and weighed ten pounds without clip or drum. It sold for a whopping $225. It fired a body-smashing .45 caliber bullet from a magazine or drum. These magazines and drums could be removed, along with the stock, making the gun quite portable and concealable. It could even be fired without the stock attached (-5% from Submachine Gun skill). The manufacturer was the Auto-Ordinance Corporation of New York.

The original 1919 prototype was designed for trench warfare fighting and was to be targeted for armed forces sales. An actual factory model did not appear until 1921.

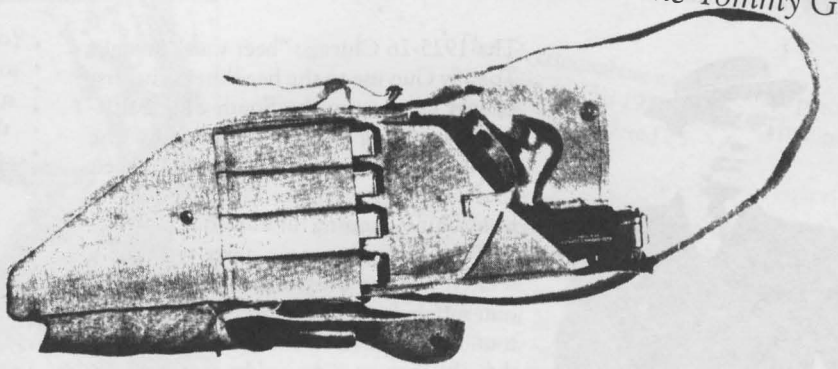
From the beginning, incendiary ammunition was also available. In game terms, this ammunition does the same damage as regular ammo but will ignite flammable material; however, it makes it much easier for others to see the source of the attack at night or in dark spaces.

The 1921 model Thompson Submachine Gun went on sale in the spring to salesmen and military representatives. Because of the anti-militarism felt around the world following the Great War, it received much interest but few orders. The exception was an IRA order (described below) and a Chinese order for 50,000 guns and an immense amount of ammo, but this last order fell through. Altogether, in 1921 about one thousand guns were actually ordered, mostly by law enforcement agencies. To say the Thompson was unsuccessful in its initial few years' sales is an understatement.



Apparently some early models were sold, knowingly or unknowingly, to the Irish Republican Army. Initially only five made it to Cork, but 495 were seized in Hoboken, New Jersey on their way to the IRA. It is impossible to tell how many eventually were sold to IRA agents and how many were lost along the way. (This may be an excellent source for the weapons and parts in a campaign setting.)

While the U.S. Armed Forces loved it, only a few National Guard units purchased the original model, primarily for containing labor riots. A smattering of law enforcement agents also picked up one or two.



In 1923 the updated "military" version was offered in hopes that it would respark U.S. Army interests. (Sales were so bad by this time that the basic price was dropped to $175 per gun.) The military version had several changes. A longer fourteen-inch barrel was added for an overall length of thirty-six inches (the Army thought this looked more military, but it did not really change performance significantly) and an unloaded weight of eleven pounds; a horizontal forearm under the barrel instead of the original pistol grip (so the gun would not so easily catch on clothing and terrain); an attachable, folding bipod for firing prone (add 12% to Submachine Gun skill when using); a WWI bayonet attachment (does not affect use); and a higher stock so it could be better fired from the shoulder, especially in single-shot mode (again, an Army requirement).

Other available accessories included a Maxim silencer (reduces a Listen check to identify gunfire and its location by half); a muzzle-flash hider (reduces any test to spot the weapon being used at night by half); and a sling with swivel mounts attached so the weapon could be carried like a normal Army rifle.

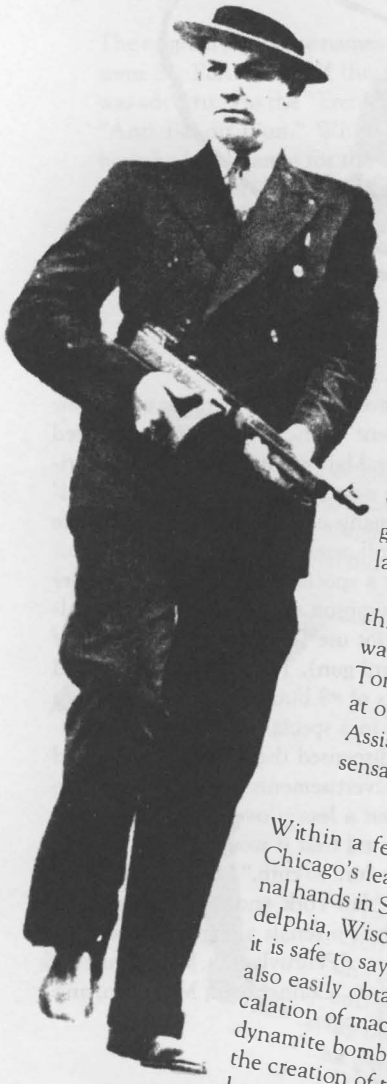
This model was to be offered for sale in lots of ten. It came in standard .45 caliber, a more powerful (+2 to damage) but less accurate (-10%) .45s caliber, and also in .351 Winchester, 9mm Mauser, and 9mm Luger calibers. These different options were added in hopes of increasing foreign sales. They didn't. Some experts think only about five of these military models were really made and they were later dismantled, but no one knows for sure.

By 1923 most purchases were for use by law enforcement agencies against "motorized bandits" and labor riots. Especially labor riots, which were so feared by the rich capitalists that many equipped their local police with a small arsenal to protect their factories. Even a special short-range .45 caliber Peters-Thompson shot cartridge was developed for riot use (use one-quarter range of the standard gun). The cartridge contained 120 pellets of #8 birdshot. These cartridges were held in a special eighteen-shot magazine and dispensed the shot widely beyond 20 feet. Advertisements claimed it would be "dealing out a lesson over a degree of punishment," and that it would "sweep a street clean from curb to curb." By 1923 the police in Boston, New York, and San Francisco had them in their arsenals along with the state police forces of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Connecticut, Michigan, and the Texas Rangers.

Starting as early as 1924, rumrunners were using machine guns against hijackers. Amazingly, it never occurred to the manufacturers or most lawmen that criminals could get their hands on these deadly weapons and use them. The main fear for years was the "bolshies" spreading revolution among the working class, so that is what the police concentrated on.

By 1925 only three thousand Tommy Guns had been sold, far less than expected—and sales were declining! A desperate Auto-Ordnance switched advertising tactics to entice private sales. The Tommy Gun was now "the ideal weapon for the protection of large estates, ranches, and plantations," a large machine "pistol" which could be carried under the coat for "instant use," an all-around weapon for almost any range. (Of course, this was all hype.) The most bizarre print ad was of a cowboy in front of the bunkhouse blasting away at rustling banditos from South of the Border. It was said to "remove bandits instantaneously." There was even a holster of sorts sold later that could hold the gun, the detached stock, and one detached drum or up to three detached magazines, all together hanging under the arm to be worn under a coat. Apparently this still was not considered a concealed weapon and the public felt no danger. That was to change toward the end of '25.

Many anti-handgun laws existed at this time, but few for large weapons. In Chicago and New York you could buy a Thompson with no questions asked. It was not considered a concealable weapon. Nationwide, the machine gun was lethal but legal.



The 1925-26 Chicago "beer wars" brought Tommy Gun use to the headlines. The first known use was by the South Side Saltis-McErlane gang in an attempt to hit the O'Donnel brothers who were invading their territory. On September 25, 1925, a drive-by machine-gunning hit was made on Spike O'Donnel. Spike came away without a scratch but the drugstore window behind him suffered a horrible fate. Folks were astounded by the number of bullets fired, but thought they were caused by many repeating rifles. The next hit, on October 4, killed and wounded a few O'Donnel allies and police determined a machine gun was being used. In February of '26 Frank McErlane was identified as the pioneering machine gun gangster and police requested to be similarly armed.

The same day, Al Capone rush-ordered three Tommy Guns of his own at a local hardware and sporting-goods store. Al's first Tommy Gun hit took out three opponents at once, including an Illinois politician and Assistant State's Attorney. It was the first sensational gangland killing.

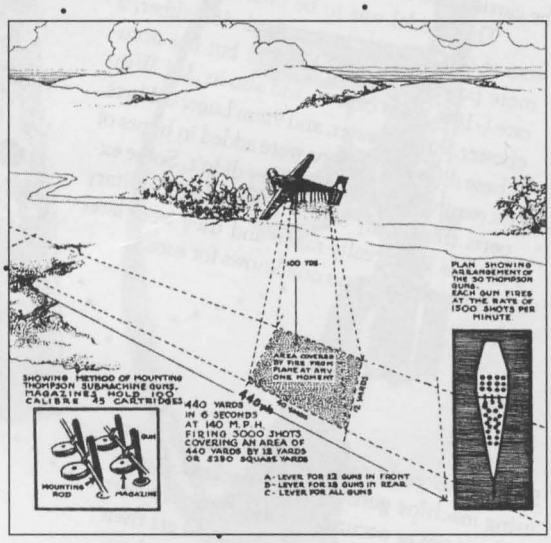
Within a few years, other gangs followed Chicago's lead and could be found in criminal hands in Southern Illinois, Detroit, Philadelphia, Wisconsin, and New York City, so it is safe to say that CoC investigators could also easily obtain them. Along with this escalation of machine-gun use were the use of dynamite bombings (even from planes) and the creation of the bulletproof vest and bulletproof cars.

"Hardest Hit" was probably Joe Aiello, hit in a double ambush of two machine guns and one sawed-off shotguns, resulting in fifty-nine bullet wounds.

Hymie Weiss and his "Siege of Cicero" resulted in ten vehicles brimming with weapons hitting Al Capone. They pumped a thousand bullets into Al's headquarters, succeeding only in wounding a bodyguard.

- You could mail-order machine guns from some distributors if you were a registered sporting-goods dealer or collector. Many of these "legitimate" gun dealers would also grind off the serial numbers for you so that the gun would allegedly become untraceable. The secret that only a few people knew was that Auto-Ordnance printed a second, hidden, serial number under the forearm grip. This number was eventually used to convict some gangsters of murder.

Ironically, Auto-Ordnance designed an airplane to use machine guns to stop gangsters on the road. The low-altitude plane carried four-hundred pounds of armor and five-hundred pounds of ammo and machine guns (thirty Thompsons mounted aiming down). The plane could open fire with all of its guns at once on an area twelve yards wide by 440 yards long, destroying anything in the area. It "flew like a flat rock" (all aviation skill tests are at one-quarter normal) and the guns jammed continuously, but it was the conceptual predecessor of modern day gunships such as Vietnam's Puff the Magic Dragon.



Official estimates of the Chicago submachine gun presence in 1926 ran from twelve to forty, while the National Crime Commission thought at least eight hundred were in criminal hands throughout America.

Chicago Daily Tribune

FINAL EDITION

MACHINE GUN GANG SHOOTS 2

Italy Seizes Tyrol Arms Cache; 50 Held

RAKE SALOON IN BEER WAR; ONE MAY DIE

Hangout Riddled by Steel Bullets.

Find Besemer Guilty; Given 20 Year Term

SMALL'S FINAL PLEA REJECTED; TALK OF OUSTER

Carlstrom to Decide on Removal Action.

NEWS SUMMARY

TEMPTED

All of this gunplay provoked both a stronger reform movement and a heavier armed police response nationwide. Many states finally outlawed possession of fully automatic weapons during the "beer wars." Law enforcement agencies increased their arsenals. Marines with choppers began to ride in mail trucks to stop hijacking.

1928 brought the Cutts compensator, which could be screwed on the barrel opening. This would redirect the muzzle blast upwards, reducing the barrel "climb" during fully automatic fire (a Cutts adds +5% to submachine gun skill). By this time, swivel mounts were also available for attaching a Thompson to an airplane's open cockpit or to a motorcycle's sidecar (which only acts to neutralize any penalties for firing from a moving vehicle).

During Prohibition, the Coast Guard possessed around five hundred Tommy Guns in their use against rum-runners. Even after Prohibition, one Thompson per large vessel (at least 774 crew members) was required, though they were rarely used. Considering their size, this makes the Coast Guard probably one of Auto-Ordnance's best customers.

By the 1930s no more Tommy Gun violence occurred in Chicago. It had migrated elsewhere. New York City suddenly became America's "crime capital" with more and more machine-gun killings, but with far more innocent bystanders (including children) gunned down than were ever touched in Chicago. In 1930, NYC police declared that 12% of all submachine gun sales were to fictitious buyers and that at least eighty-three guns were in unknown hands. Despite this glut of guns, gunrunners demanded fantastic sums for a single Thompson: as high as $1000 each. Because of the price, and the National Firearms Act, criminals started stealing more Thompsons from law enforcement agencies and National Guard Armories (who lost twenty Thompsons in a little over two years). Another source for Tommy Guns were crooked sheriffs and deputies who conveniently "lost" their town's ordnance.

Though criminal use was up, private purchase was down and by 1932 only ten Thompsons a month were ordered.

The National Firearms Act became law in 1934 affecting machine guns, sawed-off shotguns, sawed-off rifles, silencers, and any concealable firearms except pistols (which were also to be outlawed but had been dropped from the bill due to pressure from the gun lobby headed by the NRA). Furthermore, the bill did *not* outlaw private purchase or ownership, just levied a $200 tax on unlicensed making and transfer. Still, by this time many local or state laws completely forbade their sale, possession, and/or use.

During the '30s, machine guns also moved into rural crime as the Depression wore on, wielded by the likes of notorious bank robbers such as Bonnie & Clyde, the Barkers, Machine Gun Kelly, Pretty Boy Floyd, Baby Face Nelson, and Dillinger. None of these people were as able with a Tommy Gun as Capone, but they gained more notoriety. By the mid-'30s the FBI was allowed to use submachine guns also.

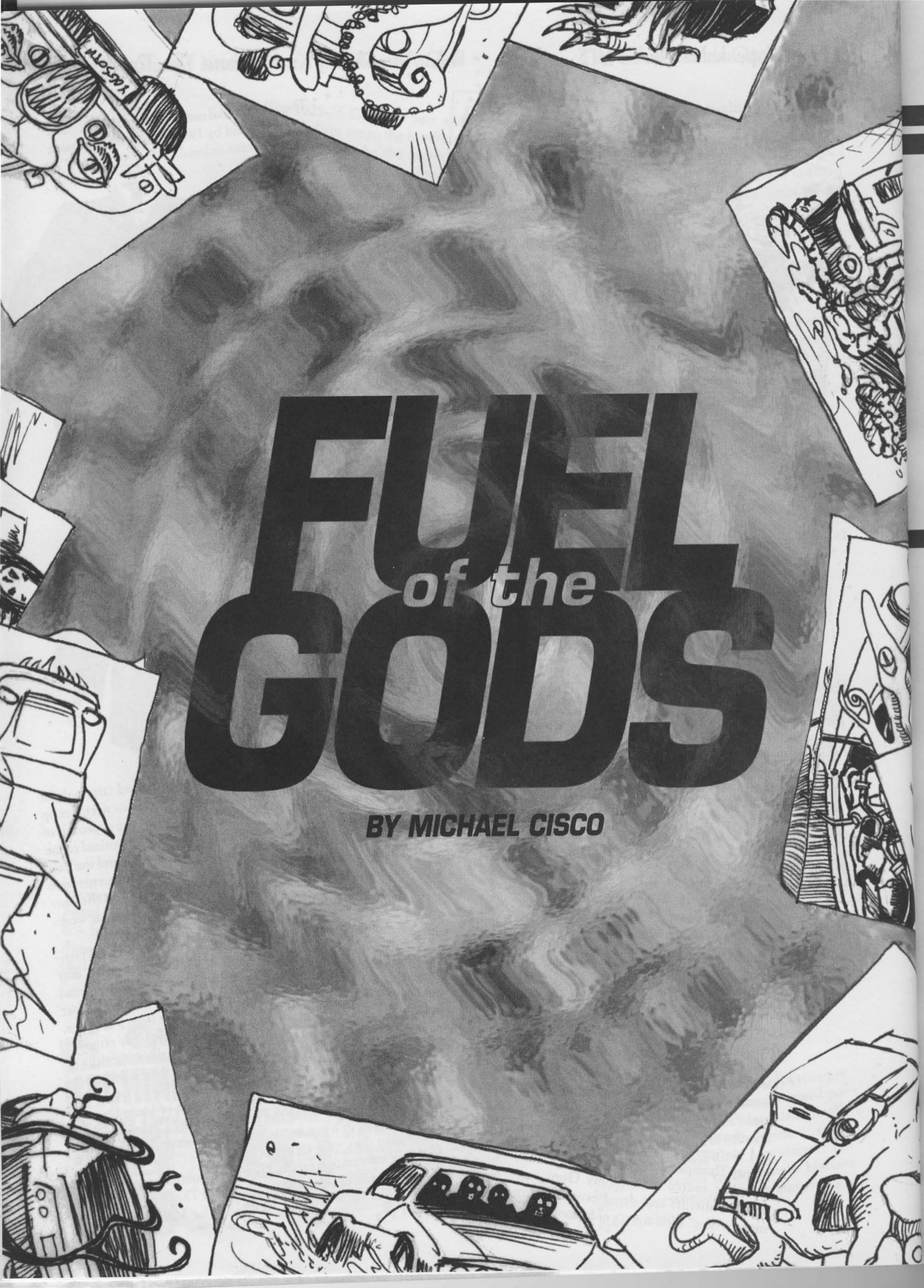
Conclusion

Overall, the introduction of the machine gun helped criminals far more than it did the armed forces or law-enforcement agencies up until World War II. Auto-Ordnance was saved by the approach of the war and their federal contracts. After the war, organized crime settled their differences in a more "contained" fashion and the days of Tommy Gun massacres and the gunning down of innocents were gone—at least until the resurgence of gang activities and the phenomenon of mass-murderers sometimes using fully automatic weapons re-emerged in the late '80s and '90s.

The average American citizenry of the '20s and '30s were terrified of machine guns and all that they represented. The public may have been fascinated with the gangsters, but detested the widespread carnage that a Tommy Gun could deal out. CoC players and Keeper should keep this in mind when letting loose a blast from a chopper. People did not just close their curtains in those days; they often responded to local violence with a call or message to the authorities at the least, and possibly even an armed response so their homes, possessions, and local community would remain safe.

Simply blasting down a cult or a collection of Deep Ones in this fashion may end up being the least of a party's worries as they become embroiled in a gun battle with the locals and the authorities of the town they were trying to save.

For more information on the Thompson Submachine Gun and its lore I suggest you check out your library for *The Gun That Made the Twenties Roar* by William J. Helmer. (The Macmillan Company, 1969.)


FUEL
of the
GODS
BY MICHAEL CISCO

IN WHICH THOSE WHO DRIVE ARE ALSO DRIVEN

This is a 1990s scenario for three or four investigators with little or no Cthulhu Mythos knowledge. At least one investigator should have some kind of scientific background, with knowledge of Chemistry mandatory—biology and psychoanalysis are also good skills to have, and a medical doctor is advised. The remaining investigators should be either company-security types, federal agents, or freelancer security specialists with law-enforcement or military backgrounds. Demolitions experts and tough guys are acceptable as well. If the Keeper has access to Pagan Publishing's sourcebook *Delta Green*, this scenario could work well as an introduction for new agents or an adventure for agents with little experience.

KEEPER INFORMATION

Recently, FOST Petroleum has been experimenting with extremely deep undersea drilling in the south Pacific. They found a small pocket of crude oil at a far greater depth than anyone had thought possible, composed of organic material believed to be over 775 million years old. The oil was pumped to the surface and tested; it was found to be of exceptionally high quality, much more combustible than ordinary oil and also highly efficient and long-lasting. Its nauseating odor, unusual greenish coloration, and peculiar effervescent-fumescent qualities were also noted, but not explained. There was an abnormally high incidence of illness and psychological stress on the platform where this oil was drilled and processed, but the on-site management of the oil rig never considered the possibility of a connection between these situations and the presence of the strange oil.

Moving cautiously, executives at FOST had a small shipment of the oil brought to the mainland for further processing and tests. It was refined into three prototype gasolines, code-named "orange" (the weakest), "green" (the strongest), and "purple" (middling strength). Four-gallon samples of these three fuels were then brought to the US by three specialist employees, living in different climates, to test in the everyday use of their own cars. This was simply an informal study, meant to test the utility of the fuel in normal road conditions.

After the first week, all contact with these three testers ceased. No one knows where they are or what has happened to them, although they have been sighted on several occasions by eyewitnesses in their communities—just driving around...

The fuel is obviously having a strange effect on the cars it powers and their drivers: the stronger the fuel, the more pronounced the effect. The "orange" driver is very messed up, the "purple" driver is completely psychotic, and the "green" driver—well, he's not doing very well.

The investigators are most likely employees of FOST, either full-time or on a freelance basis. They are assigned to locate the missing drivers and determine what's going on. Local law enforcement agencies are not to be involved (if at all possible) in order to protect the secrecy of the new fuel formulation and the apparently unfortunate side effects which might needlessly shake consumer confidence in this new fuel.

If the investigators are playing law-enforcement personnel, however, it's probably because a whistleblower within FOST called in the feds. Alternately, federal law-enforcement investigators could be assigned to the case as an under-the-table favor to FOST, most likely through the influence of a powerful senator with ties to FOST and to federal law-enforcement. If this is the case, the investigators are effectively working clandestinely for FOST, though no one would be so tactless as to say this was so. (In playtesting, the investigators were federal law-enforcement agents detached to handle the situation by an aide to Senator Orrin Hatch.) If the investigators are Delta Green agents then the same rationales can be used, though perhaps these are smokescreens to disguise Delta Green's unbiased involvement in the matter.

INVESTIGATOR BRIEFING

Inform the investigators that they have been assembled to ascertain what has happened to the three test drivers. FOST researchers have obtained the health records from the oil rig and now suspect a connection to the strange oil; these records are presented for the investigators' inspection. Nearly a dozen men took ill with pneumonia and malaria-like symptoms after brief exposure to the oil's fumes, while another ten or so were incapacitated by nervous tension within a few days of working in proximity with the oil. (They obtained relief once the oil left the rig.) Other sporadic symptoms of stress (including sleep-related and eating-related disorders) were slowly reported at the site where the oil was worked or exposed to air. All personnel affected had prior psychological and health conditions, which could account for the symptoms. FOST claims that it had not seen these records prior to bringing the oil samples to America and placing

them in the hands of company testers. (Whether this is true or not is up to the Keeper, and depends on your personal level of paranoia and cynicism.)

FOST fears that some pathogenic compound in the gas may have unbalanced or sickened the fuel-testers. "Orange" phoned in one very strange report, a recording of which is available to the investigators (it appears on p. 52 as Player Aid #1). Nothing has been heard from either of the other two men. A survey was made of other FOST personnel in the communities where the missing testers lived, and in each case a few stated that they had recognized the resident subject—"just driving"—but no other information is available. Spouses and relatives have filed missing persons reports on all three men, and reported strange auto-related behavior in all three cases: a growing obsession with their cars, an irresistible urge to drive, and some degree of physical deterioration were all noted.

FOST is very concerned and, of course, wishes to keep the whole thing as quiet as possible for as long as possible. The investigators' goals are to go to each of the three communities (starting with "orange"), find the test subjects, report on each one, and retrieve what's left of the fuel in each case. (To retrieve the

LAB RESULTS

Scientist investigators can, if desired, examine the fuel and oil themselves; other types of investigators may have the fuel and oil tested by an outside laboratory, though FOST will object strenuously to this if told and in fact will not allow samples to be removed from its facilities without a court order—subterfuge may be required if the investigators really want to get an outside lab to check out this stuff. (In this scenario, it will always be easier to ask forgiveness than permission.) The scientist investigator is discouraged by others at the facility from examining even minute amounts of either the fuel or the oil without what appear to be excessive protective measures—a full body-suit in a clean room, that is, much as is used by biohazard workers at the Army's Center for Disease Control and Prevention (see *Delta Green*, p. 257).

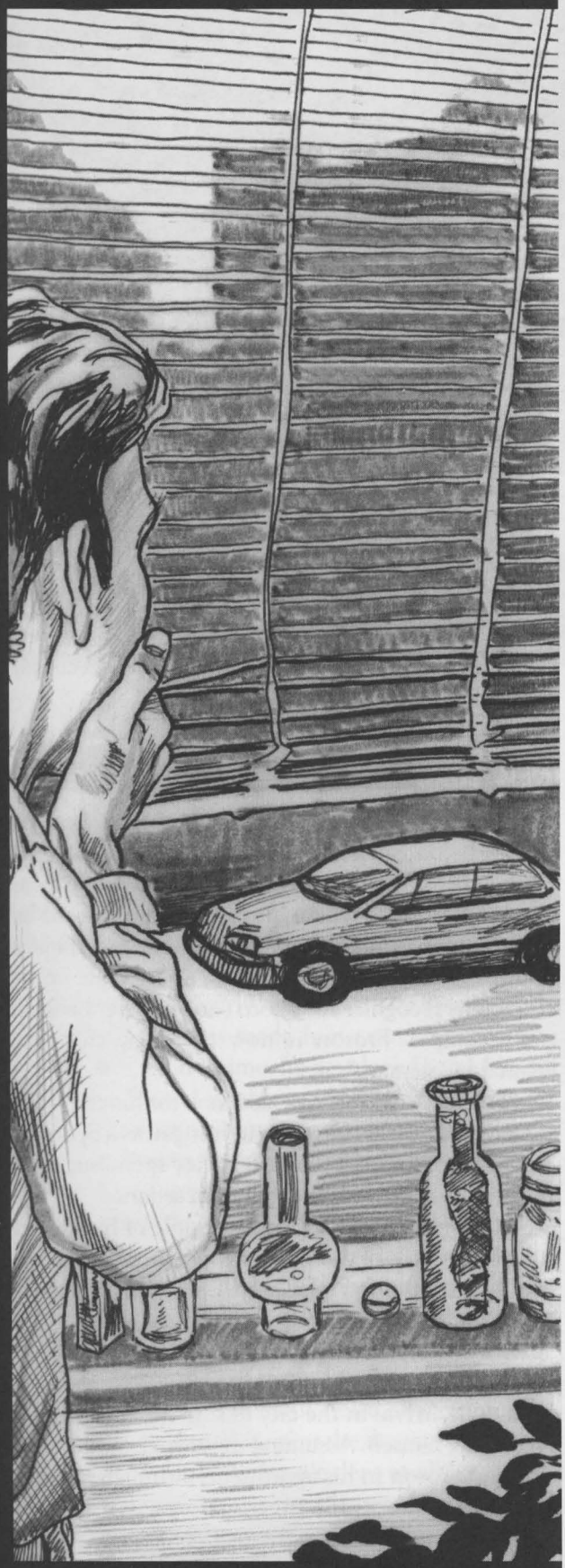
Even with all the precautions, while handling the samples the investigator will pick up a faint odor about fifty times worse than the worst thing he's ever smelled (the gas is more acid, while the oil has a much more complicated, muggy stink to it). Just looking at it should give even the most hardened scientist a bad feeling—the oil is a weird blackish-green with a bluish-grey tinge where it gleams under the fluorescents, and it seems to stain the air around it with a nimbus of yellow-brown light. A successful Spot Hidden check will detect a faint, flickering luminescence somewhere down in the substance which can never be pinpointed. The refined gas is little better, with an unhealthy pink-greyness and what appears to be a tendency to fizz a bit, the bubbles being more green than clear. The same luminescence is discernible here as well, although in perhaps more volatile form.

With a successful Chemistry check, the investigator can verify (with a cursory examination) the odd combustion behavior of the fuel—it is indeed hotter and longer lasting. The fuel's spectroscopy looks like nothing the investigator has ever seen, reflecting an organic chemical formulation of incredible complexity involving some amazingly heavy, intricate molecules that are possibly unique to this fuel. The oil is even richer and more complex, with a molecular makeup more involved than that of most organisms. Time and again the investigator will get the impression that he is looking at stuff which is like nothing else on Earth.

With a successful Biology check, the investigator will be able to extrapolate even further—this material has characteristics of both animal and vegetable organics and (this will cost 0/1 SAN) it appears to retain some kind of inherent metabolic process even in this state. In other words, it's almost as if this oil was some kind of living thing (provided one were to adopt a radically different understanding and definition of "life").

Closer investigation is underway by top FOST scientists assigned to the project. The investigator scientist won't have more than a day or so to examine the samples—he's got to go with the rest of the party. Any investigator who so much as *sees* the fuel or oil may have weird oceanic nightmares as a result (Keeper's discretion, but don't drain SAN).

If the investigators snuck out a sample for an outside lab to examine, the lab scientist succeeds in both his Chemistry and Biology checks and reports the results noted above after 1D3+2 days. The lab scientist also suffers from the aforementioned oceanic dreams, but does not think to report this unless questioned about possible side effects.



fuel, just locate it and call a provided phone number; FOST workers in biohazard gear will show up soon and take care of the substance.)

FOST will pay liberally if payment is required (the exact amount is up to the Keeper's whim) and provide the investigators with an operating budget large enough to get them around the country, put them up in hotels, get them rented cars, and arm and/or supply them should they so desire. FOST can also provide photographs and background information on each subject, as well as the recorded phone message from "orange" and a sample of the fuel and of the unrefined oil.

ORANGE

Peter Froson is a computer expert working at the FOST lab where the oil was first tested. He lives in Katonah, New York, commuting seasonally to the FOST facilities across North America, helping to supervise the installation of FOST's new company computer net. Froson was selected to participate in the fuel test because of his clean medical and psychological profile, and for his living environment which included rural, urban, and suburban areas in a fairly wide spectrum of weather conditions.

Personally, Froson is described as being sensitive, diligent, and responsible, a family man. While not overly gregarious or personable, he was widely respected. The investigators get the impression that Froson was something of a drab, ordinary guy, highly devoted to his work and very methodical.

Froson's wife knows nothing of the test project—she's frantic with worry. Unbeknownst to her, a FOST employee spotted Froson in New York City, driving around. The employee, Becky Rogers, knows Froson from his work at the New York office, but is not a close friend. She recognized him driving in the Brooklyn area. He did not notice her, and was gone before she could follow.

The investigators' first assignment is to locate Froson. They may start either in Katonah or New York City, as they please. Katonah is within roughly two hours driving time from the city and is where Froson's wife is; encourage the investigators to start there, if possible.

KATONAH

Katonah is a small town on the Harlem-Hudson line. Peter Froson was born here and decided to stay, at least part of the time. At the address given to them by FOST, the party will encounter a comfortable two-story house with an ample yard scattered with toys and a big floppy

PLAYER AID #1: THE "ORANGE" TAPE

This is a message left by Peter Froson ("Orange") on his test supervisor's answering machine roughly one week after the start of the testing. The voice is high-pitched and he is speaking very close to the receiver, making his words difficult to understand at first. He sounds distracted and increasingly confused. A car's engine is audible.

BEEP. "...Hello...this is Peter...(stutters)...Peter Froson...Listen—I'm just calling to say don't market the gas all right? Tell them that's—my—recommendation...all right?...(faintly) It's worse than we thought...(fainter still)...I really wonder if you can understand what it's like...(fainter) under the ocean...(a bit clearer) I'm always driving now...(loud and clear) So don't sell any gas, huh?...I have to get away from here...There's something going on and I need to go...okay? So I'm going to get away from the cars, I think...can...maybe I can...So I guess I'll see you...Okay...I told you don't sell it right?...okay...okay...bye..." CLICK.

dog. Mrs. Peggy Froson is a bland-looking woman who works as a teller at a local bank; she currently wears a distraught expression. The best approach to get information from her is to use the law-enforcement investigator, gathering data on her husband's disappearance. Remember—the investigators are not supposed to bring FOST directly into this (or so FOST would prefer), and Peggy has no idea that her husband's disappearance is work-related. Any non-law enforcement approach will have to rely on Persuade rolls (any attempt to Fast Talk will be met with an offended door-slam). There are three sources of information here:

- Mrs. Froson, who will explain that Peter was anxious the last few days that he was home. He kept looking out at the driveway (where his car was parked), would go off (in his car) for no reason (sometimes in the middle of the night), and talked to her more than once about moving—usually to the city. Then, one night about a week-and-a-half ago, he left and never came back. She also states that he emptied out his private bank account from a local machine sometime during that night, taking about six thousand dollars with him. Their joint account is untouched.
- The garage, where an empty container reeking of the FOST gas can be found with a successful Spot Hidden check. (Anyone who has previously smelled the gas will find the canister right away.) All of the gas is gone, but the investigators may elect to call FOST's bio-cleanup specialists in to deal with the gas can.
- Sally Froson, ten years old, eldest of the three Froson children, was awakened by the front door slamming the night her father fled. She went to the window and saw her father get into his car and drive away; she also noticed that he approached the car strangely, walking up to it and then jerking away, then moving closer, then farther, and finally jumping in, as if he were afraid of the car. Sally will tell her tale only to an investigator who treats the children kindly and who asks her specifically for information about her father.

NEW YORK

Froson was spotted on the streets of Brooklyn, just driving by, within a few days of his disappearance from Katonah. The best way to find him will be to canvass the neighborhood where his car was sighted—he has rented an apartment there under an assumed name, and his landlord, fellow tenants, and people on the street may recognize his photo (one-quarter Luck roll per attempt). Froson is now going by the name "Ronald Coleman."

The investigators can also look for his car parked somewhere nearby. Give the investigators a Spot Hidden attempt for every half hour they spend surveying the area to spot his late-model tan sedan.

A Library Use check and a couple of hours scanning back issues of the "for rent" postings for the area could turn up a few places in the neighborhood to check out as well.

Ultimately, Froson won't be too hard to find, although if the investigators take more than two days from their arrival in the city to find him then he will have hung himself. Assuming they arrive in time, they will find Froson in his apartment, although he won't come to the door—the investigators will have to either break it down, pick the lock, or get the super to open it for them (and the super won't do that for anything less than a badge).

"Ronald Coleman" doesn't resemble his picture so much any more—he's emaciated, with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks. He's become so weak he may be easily overcome, although he won't resist the investigators. His apartment is all but empty: clean, but stale. The kitchen is stocked to last for months, mostly canned food, and boxes of earplugs. Froson is wearing at least two earplugs in each ear at the moment, which is why he didn't come to the door.

If questioned gently, Froson will be able to make a brief reply: the gas made him crazy, it made him want to drive all the time, he developed some kind of autophilia. Finally unable to deal with his growing love-hate attraction-repulsion to his car, he ran from his family, fearing he might somehow be a danger to them in his increasingly irrational state. He fled to the city where he could rely on the subway to get around and ditch his car for good—but of course, the city is full of cars. He hadn't counted on that and what's more, he couldn't bring himself to get rid of his own car. So he stocked up on supplies, holed himself up in this apartment (facing away from the street), plugged his ears against traffic noise, slept as much as possible at first, and then, after the dreams came, slept as little as possible—he hasn't slept at all for several days. If questioned about the dreams, Froson will reply that he first remembers only dreams about driving, driving around—but then came other dreams, dreams about the bottom of the sea. (At this point, any investigators who have been troubled by weird dreams will recognize Froson's imagery—and lose 1/1D4 SAN.)

Less careful questioning, violence, or any kind of rough handling will cause Froson to withdraw completely. He will freeze up and refuse to speak, petrified.

Froson is harmless, although his Sanity is dangerously low. FOST will see to it that he is hospitalized and his family informed of his condition. If the investigators managed to retrieve him without hurting him or causing him to freeze up, give them each a SAN point.

One quick phone call to the FOST fuel retrieval number quickly brings a crew of men to the scene. They move Froson's car into a large truck and drive it off to be cleaned and examined. "Orange" is accounted for.

Epilogue

William Stebelkov is a full-time FOST geologist, something of a maverick in his profession but with excellent credentials. He has no immediate family except for a couple of cousins, and spends most of his time inspecting drilling sites and core samples. He lives in Glendale, Colorado, where he has his own (small) research lab, and from whence he puts out *Rocks*, a periodical dedicated to unusual geological research.

Stebelkov is described as being highly strung, but very sociable. He dresses casually, favoring boots and cowboy hats. Most of his colleagues agree that he has

no special genius for geology, but that (provided he was interested) he was a driven, implacable worker, not unwilling to entertain fairly radical notions. It was mostly his adventurous qualities that prompted FOST executives to select him as a test subject, although they also wanted to see how the fuel would respond to off-road conditions.

With FOST's permission, Stebelkov brought one of his best friends, a car mechanic named Boris Stevens, in on the plan, with the idea that Boris could check up on Stebelkov's custom Buick and provide FOST with detailed reports about the effects of the gas on the engine.

As he is prone to vanish into the wilderness for days at a time, FOST is hoping that Stebelkov's failure to report back to the company is simply a manifestation of his eccentricity, not a symptom of anything more severe. Unfortunately, the people he routinely calls to house-sit for him whenever he goes away were not contacted before his current absence. Even more unfortunately, there's an APB out on Stebelkov's car after two hit-and-run fatalities reported in the past few days in his area.

The investigators are liable to encounter greater difficulties pursuing Stebelkov, in that their investigation may conflict or at least compete with that of the police. Stebelkov's license plate number was taken at both of the hit-and-run incidents (this information is freely available in recent newspapers): in both cases, the victim was run down at high speed while in a crosswalk; the first incident occurred in broad daylight. Eyewitness accounts all agree that these were deliberate murders, that the car actually swerved toward its victims. The witnesses went on to identify Stebelkov from photographs as the driver.

Any law-enforcement investigators will have to negotiate with police if they want to get close to Stebelkov's house; presumably, the investigators will cobble together some sort of cover story to explain their interest in Stebelkov. (Breaking in is another option, but the cops have his house staked out in case he returns and this could prove difficult.) Should the party somehow get into Stebelkov's house, they will find no evidence of the FOST gas container and not much in the way of additional clues (although practically every sheet of scrap paper in the house is covered with manic doodles of cars).

Likewise, most of Stebelkov's local friends and associates (a bartender, a waitress, and a guy who sells camping equipment) have been interviewed already, and Fast Talk or Persuade rolls may be necessary to get them to go through it all again. Most will say only that Bill seemed to retire from them more and more "after he got back this time" (*i.e.*, when he returned from the FOST labs with his fuel sample). They won't really have more to say than that "he didn't look good" and "he'd changed."

BORIS STEVENS

However, there is one clue that the police have overlooked but that FOST has not—Boris Stevens. Boris worked up Bill's custom Buick and they became friends, and, owing to the auto-related nature of their friendship, Stebelkov withdrew from Boris last of all his friends. If the investigators think to approach him and identify themselves as FOST representatives, Boris will be ready to give what help he can. (FOST is aware that Stebelkov had recruited Stevens to help test the fuel, and will tell the investigators so.) Boris appreciates being dealt with in a direct way, honestly and without manipulation.

He will report that Bill became more and more obsessed with his car once he started using the gas, bringing it in every day, fiddling with it, adjusting it, insisting that Boris go over the engine at the most minute level, spending hours and hours noting the fuel's effects—and what effects! Boris is visibly disturbed. He describes the awful smell of the fuel and exhaust, and goes much further: the engine was beginning to wear rapidly, and in such strange ways. Some parts seemed almost melted, other parts seemed to have expanded somehow. Even when standing still, the car never cooled down entirely, and every morning when he opened the hood a cloud of stinking, grey-green steam would puff up at him from the engine block. At the same time, the car's mileage was incredible. Stebelkov was getting almost a hundred miles to a gallon. Boris checked the odometer every time he looked at the car, and he noted that Bill was racking up the miles at a surprising rate. Toward the end (meaning the last couple of times Bill came by), the odometer was jacked up so high that it could only mean that Bill hadn't stopped driving since his last visit.

Boris can also show the investigators the slicks on his garage floor left by Stebelkov's car - it's a foul, green-black reeking gunk that shows no sign of ever coming off. Looking at it is like staring into a gaping, toothless mouth seething with stench.

Finally, Boris will relate one incident that may be the most important clue of all. Once, soon before Stebelkov disappeared, Boris was checking the engine and he went around and turned on the radio to keep himself company (Stebelkov was in the bathroom at the time). However, all he could get on the radio was a kind of high-pitched, funny-sounding static. As he

listened, he thought for a moment he could make out faint voices—weird, horrible little voices—muttering behind the static, repeating a few phrases over and over again. Then Stebelkov came charging furiously in, turned the radio off, and stared at Boris: "He looked homicidal—and he told me never to touch the radio, ever. He calmed down a little after that and told me it was just broken and I shouldn't use it...but before that I saw, between his being angry and his calming down—and this is no lie—he was terrified. Absolutely terrified." But before they got cut off, (and here he really looks nervous) Boris had managed to make out one of the voices in the static, saying "Green Ridge" over and over again.

GREEN RIDGE

Stebelkov drives all the time now, getting out only long enough to dash into roadside toilets. He keeps alive by eating drive-through fast food, using a big wad of money he took out of his account from a drive-through teller (he figured his accounts would be monitored after the hit-and-run murders—he's not stupid). Stebelkov drives all over the state, and has even dipped across the border more than once, although he's not yet been spotted outside Colorado (so as to avoid the FBI). However, for all of his roving he tends to return to Green Ridge and when the radio tells him it's time to take another life, he always launches his attack from Green Ridge. If the investigators hang around Green Ridge and keep an eye out, they'll spot his car sooner or later, either circling around or making a beeline toward his next victim.

There are several ways to play this out, depending on the Keeper. You may choose to stage an all-out car chase right from the start, catch the investigators on the ground, or give the party an opportunity to reason with Stebelkov (the author would encourage this latter option).

Every now and then, Bill has to pull over. This is the only time he actually leaves his car. An enterprising investigator could take this opportunity to steal the car, and/or the investigators may ambush Stebelkov and attempt to subdue him or reason with him. Note that he will need some calming down if he is deprived of his car—no less than three consecutive Psychoanalysis rolls will be required to keep him from going berserk entirely and attacking anyone present (regardless of the odds) heedless of injury until killed, restrained, or knocked unconscious. If the Psychoanalysis rolls work, Bill will calm down, and Persuade rolls may be used to get him to drop his gun, to come quietly, *etc*.

Should the investigators creep up on him as he sleeps (in his parked car, usually by the side of the road), they'll have a more difficult time of it since Bill keeps the car locked and is more likely to bolt if confronted while still in his car. However, if the investigators are able to make two Sneak rolls apiece,

they may be able to creep up on the car and slash the tires, pop a potato into the tailpipe, pour sugar into the gas-tank, or what have you. (Jacking up the rear wheels or opening the hood and doing anything directly to the engine would be too great a disturbance—Stebelkov would wake up). The moment anything is done to cripple the car, the radio will turn on of its own accord and scream an alarm to Stebelkov, waking him immediately. (SAN loss 0/1 to witness this). Give him a Luck roll to get the car moving, but he won't be able to get past 5 miles per hour if any real damage has been done to the car, and that will last only about 1D6 rounds. Stebelkov will most likely remain in the car once it stops, empty his gun at any available target, and then reach for his tire iron, prepared to fight until killed or knocked unconscious should anyone try to remove him from the car. Investigators who are willing to take the time may try to talk to him (once his bullets are gone), but all the time his radio is blaring, telling him to fight and resist. Any Psychoanalysis roll attempted while the radio is talking to Stebelkov will be at a full -33% (remember that three consecutive rolls are needed). Should the investigators succeed in Psychoanalysis three times despite the radio's baleful influence, they can Persuade (at 20% of their normal skill) Stebelkov to turn the radio off himself, thus canceling any penalty to further Persuade rolls.

The alternative entails either Bill getting the jump on investigators on the ground or a high-speed car chase. Considering how much automotive acrobatics there will be in the third and final phase of this scenario, Keepers should consider just how much action is desired. The author recommends that whatever car-to-car or car-to-man dueling occurs in this section be handled in a more narrative as opposed to rules-oriented fashion, with emphasis on fear and danger instead of rolling Stebelkov's Drive skill every round.

If the investigators can apprehend Stebelkov without hurting him, give them each a point of SAN. Owing to his obvious insanity, Stebelkov is destined to be sent directly into indefinite confinement at a mental institution, without trial and with a minimum of publicity. Otherwise, if he is killed his death will be attributed to brave local sheriff's deputies, defending themselves in the line of duty. Another quick phone call to FOST and the clean-up teams will be on site within the hour to remove Stebelkov's car.

GREEN

A recent graduate of MIT with a degree in chemistry, Jan Bronski now lives in Willoughby, a seaside town in central California. He's often out of town, working on-site or at various FOST facilities in the US and abroad. He is unmarried, and most of his family lives on the east coast. While he is an excellent chemist, Bronski is occasionally somewhat lax in his attention and is notoriously unpunctual and forgetful. Nevertheless, most of his co-workers like him well enough and he was noted for his generosity and good manners, as well as his skill at games of chance—especially when money was involved. He was selected for the project because of his initiative, his strong knowledge of chemistry, and his location—to study the fuel's response to extensive driving on California's highways.

Bronski's relatives have not heard from or seen him at all for weeks—and they are concerned. He kept in close touch with them, on a weekly basis at the very least. They contacted friends who found his house deserted (his car, gone), and his friends contacted the local police. So far, three people have reported seeing Bronski driving around in the Willoughby area.

Bronski is "Green," and he's going to make "Purple" look like a cinch. From the moment he started using the experimental gas, Bronski was unable to stop driving, even for a moment. He drove continuously for over a week, until he almost died of dehydration. At the point of death, however, his car-radio, which had been speaking to him nonstop from the beginning, instructed him to stop the car, get out, and refresh his thirst—from the gas-tank. He did, and now he subsists entirely on the "green" fuel. He is no longer human.

Since then, Bronski's fierce need to drive continuously began to abate a little (since he himself is now "driven"), and he is able to leave his car at will to carry out other tasks. He makes use of a condemned garage on the outskirts of Willoughby, near the beach, preparing for the night (very soon now) when he will raise an army of cars to take over the town and make sacrifices to the sea.

WILLOUGHBY

Originally planned as a thriving community squeezed in the narrow strip between the mountains and the beach, years of disinterest and general population flight both north and south have kept Willoughby small, less than a couple thousand people. Bronski moved here because it was cheap and quiet.

Investigators will discover in Willoughby a place that hasn't changed much since the fifties—the two prime social spots are still the drugstore/soda fountain, and the Blue Light bar and grill. The

NEW SPELLS

Jan Bronski, "green," has several magical rituals taught to him by his car radio. These rituals enable him to conjure up more of the strange oil, refine it into gasoline, operate cars with his mind, and convert the gasoline into magical energy.

CALL OIL: Bronski can summon more of the oil directly from the ocean simply by crying out for it and expending one of his many magic points. Within fifteen minutes, the oil will bubble up from cracks in the sea floor and travel in a sub-surface stream toward the caster, threading its way underwater and then rising to the surface near the beach, washing in on the tide in a single coherent strand or even threading itself into a sewer conduit and backing up into a bathtub or toilet (whatever is more convenient). Seeing this happen costs 0/1 SAN.

REFINE FUEL: Bronski can then make the raw oil into "green"-grade gasoline by placing it in a pan and running current through it. The gas will rise to the top, leaving behind a heavy, revolting sediment. He must expend one magic point to perform the conversion, but may convert as much fuel as he likes (during the refining he will sit beside the pan, concentrating and shuddering with effort, slobbering brackish foam from his lips). Bronski usually eats the remaining residue. Watching the refinement costs no SAN, but watching Bronski eat the gunk costs 0/1 SAN, especially if the investigator can smell it.

CAR POSSESSION: For three magic points, Bronski can conjure up a residual malignant consciousness from the fuel, so that it actually takes possession of a car, turning it into a kind of symbiotic organism. The fuel must first be deposited in the gas tank. Having awakened this consciousness Bronski may either be content to let the car do what it likes, or he may order it to do his bidding from up to one mile away. From this point on, treat the car as an independent organism with forward-facing vision, but no hearing or other senses. It will roam around within an area centered on Bronski with a radius of one mile, typically hostile to pedestrians. To make the spell work, Bronski needs only to concentrate and murmur in front of the car in question for a few minutes. Seeing the ritual costs no SAN, but seeing a driverless car roaming around like a hungry animal costs 1/1D4 SAN. Having awakened the fuel's consciousness, Bronski need expend no further magic points on keeping the car going, but if it ever shuts down or runs out of fuel it will need to be magically reawakened again. The car will try to remain within a mile of Bronski, but if for any reason it leaves his area of influence it will shut down and need to be reawakened. If the fuel tank is blown up or drained, it will likewise render the car dormant again (although occasional weird effects will manifest until the gas has been completely worked out of the car's systems).

CONVERT FUEL: This is a simple ritual whereby the strange fuel may be specially treated in such a way that, when imbibed, it is instantly transformed into magic points. The fuel must be treated in advance, charged with a magic point during the ritual, and then, when drunk, will provide Bronski (and anybody else who happens to live exclusively on R'lyeh gasoline) with 1D4 magic points. This may be used to boost magic points above their normal maximum.

gas stations still use the old antique pumps, the street-lights are weak and many of them don't work at all, there are no chain stores the investigators recognize, only one cash machine inside the bank (which is closed 20 hours out of every 24 on the two days a week that it's open). Bronski has a small house near the base of the mountains; the police have already cordoned it off and law-enforcement investigators will have to come up with another good excuse to get inside. There's only a sheriff and his deputy to deal with, so this shouldn't be too hard. Bronski's house is meticulous, as neat and orderly as can be.

Should anyone check Bronski's papers, they will find a disk sitting on his desk, next to his computer. There are files on the disk, including one that appears to be a record Bronski was going to keep on the "green" fuel. After the requisite heading information, the only entry says: "Left to begin test, 2:35 PM." This entry is dated on a Saturday, about three weeks ago. If Bronski came back from that test, he didn't do any more work on the report.

There is evidence around the garage that Bronski had the fuel—an awful stink, for one. This is the worst smell the investigators have encountered on this case. It emanates from a single bubbling stain about the

size of a quarter which makes the garage almost uninhabitable. Any investigator who gets his face within two feet of the stain (to observe it closely or to take a sample of it) will have to roll his CONx3 to resist vomiting. Even if the CON check is successful, the investigator's eyes will be tearing, his face will swell and redden, and he may have minor convulsions.

The side door to the garage is curiously ajar, just as it was found by police (an Idea roll will suggest how out of place this is with the neatness prevailing in the house). A Spot Hidden or Track roll will turn up faint sandy footprints leading into the garage, to a place very near the stain. (This is where Bronski returned briefly to his home one night to retrieve the rest of the gas—he hadn't put all of it in his carat once.)

THE WITNESSES

If the investigators ask to see the eyewitness reports or speak to the witnesses themselves, there shouldn't be any problem provided the law-enforcement investigators' reasons are good enough. The reports are entirely straightforward: after it was made known around town that Bronski was missing, three reports were turned in. One states that Bronski blew through the town's only stoplight, nearly causing an accident, in the middle of the night two weeks ago. The second places Bronski by the side of the road fiddling with his car in the middle of the night, possibly changing a tire, a week and a half ago. The third report describes a sighting of Bronski speeding down the main thoroughfare in the daytime. The third report mentions a possible fourth sighting within a couple of hours down by the Willoughby pier.

It's not a bad idea to interview the witnesses about the specifics of their encounters with Bronski, and a Keeper would not be remiss in encouraging them to do so. The first report was filed by a Mrs. Rene Moorhead, the town librarian. She can be found in the library at any time during daylight hours, every day except Sunday. She will merely repeat that she was sitting at a red light, returning from a late bridge night with her friends, and that when the light turned green she failed to react immediately, being somewhat tired. Then Bronski blew through the intersection at top speed. If she hadn't been distracted when the light turned green, Mrs. Moorhead relates with a shudder, she would certainly have been in the intersection at the time. Despite her confusion at the moment, she was sure she recognized Bronski, as he came into the library often when he was in town and had even given her rides in his car (back before his recent problems). "He didn't even look in my direction," she says.

The second report was filed by a tow-truck driver named Jerry Van Cleave who operates out of a garage in the hills. He was familiar with Bronski, having just towed his old car (not the current one) on the occasion of its final breakdown. Jerry doesn't get much business, and remembers all his customers—Bronski in particular, for his generous tip. Speeding to respond to a call (a car in distress on the interstate) Jerry happened to pass Bronski on the road without thinking twice about it. Jerry reiterates his report for the party, but a Psychology or a halved Idea roll will give the investigators the feeling Jerry isn't telling everything. If any investigator can successfully Persuade or Psychoanalyze Jerry, he may be able to convince the man to say what he really saw—Bronski was kneeling beside his car, but he wasn't fixing any tire. It looked like he had a straw or a tube stuck into his gas tank, and he was sucking at it, taking great gulps of gas.

The third report was filed by Bernard Goldsmith, who runs a small market down by the pier. Bronski used to be a regular at the market, rather than going to the big supermarket a dozen or so miles up the freeway in Fairvale. Recently, Goldsmith was shocked to see the missing Bronski blast by in his car, going full tilt down the main drag past the store. Being in the middle of a transaction, Goldsmith was unable to investigate right away and by the time he got outside, Bronski was long gone. Then, a few hours later, Goldsmith saw Bronski a second time (what was tentative in his statement to the police has since become a certainty), walking around down by the pier toward the end of an irregular alley called Seaview Lane. Again, Goldsmith tried to get away from the store and down to see Bronski, but he only just caught a glimpse of him disappearing up Seaview Lane. It is clear that Goldsmith liked Bronski a great deal and is very concerned for him, but an Idea roll indicates that there's something more he has to say; any attempt to get him to speak will be successful (no roll necessary) if the investigators seem to show genuine concern for the missing man. With some prompting, Bernard will say: "Well, it's just that he looked so bad—I thought he could be sick. I didn't see him close up at all, but he looked like he hadn't slept for days. He looked like he hadn't bathed or eaten much either. In fact, I've never seen anyone looking as bad as Bronski looked then. I've seen dead bodies that looked better than him."

All this information should require 0/1 SAN rolls considering what the investigators have already encountered with "orange" and "purple."

SEAVIEW LANE

This is the next place the investigators should look. It's a suggestive place: a run-down lane, the asphalt disintegrating and sinking into the sand, running parallel to the beach for a few shapeless blocks. There's a corroding warehouse here, two stories high and shot through with rust, every window broken, and a giant, empty parking-lot out front. Next to that is a small cannery, also closed and falling apart. There's a truck-yard on the other side of the street, and the remains of an old service station. The parking lots and paved areas are shattered like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle, with tufts of sea-grass in the cracks, and all the paving runs together into one big island of cement criss-crossed with rusty, mangled chain-link fences. Toward one corner, near the beach, is an abandoned garage—Bronski's headquarters. If the investigators find the garage, then Bronski won't be there and neither will his car. However, even a quick indication will show that the garage is not so abandoned after all:

- The doors have been recently oiled and open quietly. Simply point out the quietness and smoothness of the doors and let the investigators figure this out.
- There is an unpleasant odor in here: not the same as the spilled fuel in Bronski's garage, but similar (it's exhaust residue). Bronski's car no longer leaks fuel (all its systems have organically fused) so there are no stains on the floor. A halved Idea roll can identify the smell as being similar to the spilled fuel, but then again, it could just as easily be the stench of some animal rotting in a corner.
- There are a few dead rats here and there, but, should any investigator with Biology or Natural History examine these animals and make a successful skill check, he will determine that whatever killed these rats was some kind of horrifyingly powerful acid or poison, possibly the fuel.
- Scattered around among the mislaid and slowly dissolving tools are scraps of paper. Should anyone notice (Spot Hidden) and examine them, he or she will discover endless sketches of cars: cars with strange alien eyes, cars with mouths, cars dragging rotting entrails, cars filled with corpses, cars emerging from the ocean with shadowy passengers, sharks and octopi that resemble cars, and bizarre anthropoid figures emerging from a car-radio (a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll would identify these creatures as mythos entities, mostly relating to the sea). These drawings are of course all from Bronski.
- A large pan lies in one corner with jumper cables attached to it. There is a tiny residue of fuel in it, easily identifiable as "green" fuel. (This is where Bronski does his magical refining.)
- A Spot Hidden or Track roll will turn up more sandy footprints like the ones in Bronski's garage.
- The most important clue is a series of rough sketches wedged down behind the tool chest (a Spot Hidden will find this). The first page (it has the number 1 in a circle in the upper right hand corner) is a narrative diagram, like a comic strip, of a roughly human figure performing a series of gestures in front of an equally rough drawing of the sea, in response to which a thread of some black substance or coherent liquid appears out of the water and collects in a pan held by the figure at the water's edge. The second page (identified with a number 2) is a similar schematic, showing a figure doing a series of gestures over a pan filled with the black substance, with two wires leading from it (an Idea roll will identify this as the pan in the corner mentioned earlier) and eventually draining off a clear fluid and pouring it into the gas tank of a car. The third page (also numbered) is much more abstract, showing an incredibly detailed, incomprehensibly complex diagram, featuring a single figure in a circle in the middle, a human form with six arms, indicating perhaps a series of gestures. From this figure there radiate an intricate web of lines (not simple lines, but double lines, indicating channels perhaps [actually they symbolize threads of fuel]) which weave about and seem to penetrate a variety of boxlike objects with small circles superimposed on them (an Idea roll will identify these as cars). The lines connecting the central figure with the boxes are all cut off at the same point, where the words "one mile" are scrawled. All the sketches appear to have been hastily done. They are of course drawings that Bronski did as the radio described to him the protocols for performing the Call Oil, Refine Fuel, and Car Possession rituals.

At this point, the investigators are free to take whatever action they intend to take. The next specified events will take place on the second day after their arrival—Bronski will be informed of the investigators' presence by his radio within a few hours of their first visit to his house, and will begin to take steps to take over the town at that point. If the investigators stake out the garage, they will be disappointed; Bronski is much too busy with his checklist: first, to spike the main tanks of both of the town's two gas stations with

"green" fuel; second, to inject a quantity of the "green" into the gas tanks of parked cars on the street; and third, to set a little trap (described later).

However, investigators who keep their eyes open around town will notice Bronski themselves at some point, determined by the Keeper. Whatever the circumstances, the investigators should only spot Bronski from a distance, and should not have any opportunity to speak to him or follow him. Most likely, they will spot him going about his preparations. Just as described by Bernard Goldsmith, Bronski looks incredibly bad, and investigators should notice with a start that Bronski's car (a mid-1970s Chrysler station wagon) is also visibly altered. The car's battleship-grey exterior has taken on a greenish-pink tint, and its lights give off a revolting pink light. The windshield and side windows are blotched with grey-green warped spots, and barnacle-like irregularities have sprouted from the metal. The exhaust pipe seems to have gotten longer and become semi-flexible, and belches a yellowish-green stream of clammy smoke that twists in hideously suggestive shapes behind the car (and the stench is beyond revolting, like burning sea-bottom stew). The engine emits both a deep, bone-jarring thrum and a faint, intermittent, ghoulish wail that seems to chatter in syllables. If the car passes within a few dozen feet of the investigators, the radio will be audible as well: it rasps, squawks, and gurgles like a zombified, semi-liquefied, deep-sea parrot speaking through a defective intercom.

At least one investigator should have the opportunity to witness, from a distance, Bronski performing the Call Fuel ritual. By the time the investigator can get to the spot Bronski will be long gone, but there will be a trace of greenish-black oil on the sand, retracting like a tentacle into the sea. The investigators should be able to figure out that this ritual is the one depicted in the first sketch found in Bronski's garage.

AUTO ARMY

A little after 1:00 AM on the appointed night, after Bronski has managed to taint the fuel supply and a number of cars parked on the street with the "green," he will drink a bunch of his specially prepared magic-point fuel, charging his batteries. (He can have as many Magic Points as the Keeper reasonably desires.) Then he will move around town as quickly as possible, performing the Car Possession ritual on every street, bringing as many cars to life as he can.

Around two in the morning, the calls will start coming in to the sheriff's office—first about stolen cars, then about cars driving around without drivers, *etc.*, and sightings of someone answering to Jan Bronski's description doing "funny dances" in the street. These calls will be relayed to the investigators by the sheriff. Bronski is moving across town from north to south, building his army. Cars are already roaming the streets, hunting for pedestrians or smashing into houses trying to get at the filling inside.

As for Bronski's aforementioned trap: his radio has informed him about the investigators and, in particular, which cars are theirs and when those cars will be unwatched. Unless the investigators' cars have never been out of their sight since coming here, Bronski will have infected them with the "green." The investigators' cars (and the sheriff's cars as well) have all gotten the treatment, and were Bronski's first target tonight. When the investigators and the sheriff run to their trusty cars, they'll find their trusty cars running to them. More mean-spirited Keepers may provide a rude awakening for the investigators, like a visit from their cars through the motel wall.

Within an hour and a half or so, Bronski will have expended as many magic points as he dares, leaving himself with about 8. By this time there will be anywhere from 12 to 19 cars prowling around town, and Bronski will move toward city hall, calling the cars to him, with the exception of the police cars and the investigators cars—these are instructed to hunt down and kill all law-enforcement personnel as well as the investigators. They will do this, tirelessly, until they run out of gas or are destroyed/incapacitated by the investigators. As before with Stebelkov, the Keeper is encouraged to play this more as a narrative than as a game-with-rules, so as to prevent play from being bogged down by die-rolls. Investigators who behave foolishly or expose themselves to risk for whatever reason should have a chance of being attacked and killed by the cars; if the investigators come up with good schemes for outwitting or disabling the cars, let them carry them out successfully.

Any investigators who get up on a rooftop or to a similarly high place to look out over the town will see the automobile activity is most heavily concentrated in the town center; alternatively, the sheriff (if he survives being attacked by his car) may telephone to say that Bronski has holed up at City Hall. Either way the investigators should move in on Bronski, who supervises the maelstrom of automobiles racing around and around the city hall from the back seat of his own car, which he drove up the steps and through the city hall's front doors (it only got halfway inside before jamming against the door frame). He is delighted with the way things are going and instructs the cars to tear up the shops in the

immediate vicinity, shouting intermittently about how "the radio told me to do it," and how well he's "done it," and how he intends to "keep on doing it, everywhere!" Any attempts to shoot at Bronski will be at a -75% penalty owing to his exceptional cover (only his head is visible, and through clouded glass at that), and will immediately draw automotive attention to the shootist.

Basically, there is no way out of the situation other than to kill Bronski. Even if one were able to destroy all the cars, Bronski would still never surrender without a struggle. He has no desire to fight hand-to-hand, and will try to use his cars as much as possible. If confronted somehow, he will escape into the city hall and try to get out through a window or a side exit. Bronski will fight only if cornered. If Bronski is killed, the cars will all stop, the spell broken.

Investigators will get 1D6 SAN for stopping Bronski. FOST will happily claim Bronski's car, commandeer his body, and pay to haul off and replace whatever cars were destroyed, as well as to pay to help rebuild damaged buildings and property in Willoughby. These payments will be made as anonymous "goodwill donations" so that FOST is not connected any more than it has to be.

Investigators who have a higher calling—such as federal agents, Delta Green members, and other such spirited citizenry—may not want to see FOST get away clean with this. What such investigators do in retaliation is up to them.

If asked, FOST will claim that it is suspending further work with the strange fuel owing to its clearly dangerous properties. The investigators are welcome to believe this if it helps them sleep at night. They are likewise welcome to believe in the existence of the Tooth Fairy and that large corporations have vested reasons to act in the best public interest.

NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

Bill Stebelkov —"purple"

STR	15	CON	17	DEX	11		
APP	10	SIZ	15	INT	14		
POW	13	EDU	17	SAN	19	HP	16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Car (67%, 1D10 per 10 mph), Tire Iron (26%, 1D6+1D4), .38 pistol (48%, 1D10, six shots)

Skills: Computer Use 49%, Dodge 27%, Drive Auto 88%, Geology 56%, Mechanical Repair 51%, Spot Hidden 43%

Notes: Warped by the gasoline and beginning to hear voices from the radio, Bill has gone bonkers.

Jan Bronski—"green"

STR	13	CON	12	DEX	15		
APP	11	SIZ	12	INT	17		
POW	16	EDU	18	SAN	00	HP	12

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: Bronski no longer needs his organs to work, so they don't. Furthermore, he barely registers physical pain and unless it's very heavy he suffers no consequences from bleeding. As a result of all this, he cannot be impaled, stunned, driven into shock, or knocked unconscious. He is immune to smoke and poison. He cannot drown or smother. He ignores electrical damage. Bullets and thrusting weapons do half damage, full damage on an impale. Acid does half damage. Cutting, bashing, and slashing weapons do normal damage.

Weapons: Car (75%, 1D10 per mph), Kitchen Knife (25%, 1D6+1D4) Tire Iron (25%, 1D6+1D4)

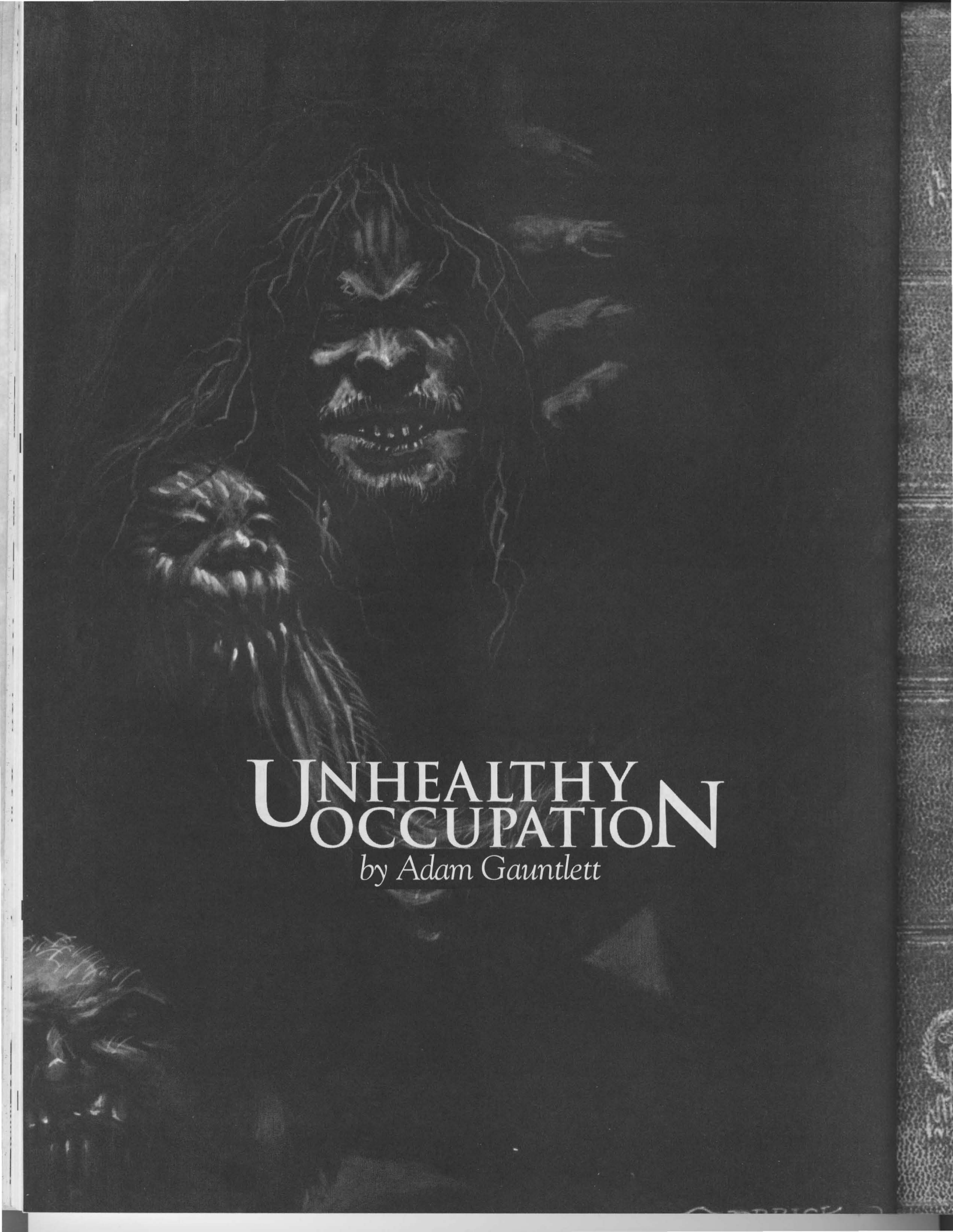
Skills: Chemistry 68%, Computer Use 71%, Cthulhu Mythos 22%, Dodge 37%, Drive Auto 95%, Electrical Repair 54%, Geology 42%, Hide 26%, Listen 38%, Mechanical Repair 43%, Sneak 44%, Spot Hidden 62%

Spells: Call Oil, Refine Fuel, Car Possession, Convert Fuel

Notes: Bronski is now a gasoline-vampire who stinks of the weird gas. He looks terrible: pale, puffy, emaciated, with red-rimmed eyes and ragged lips, grey teeth, and a hunched, vulturelike posture.

SO ACCUSTOMED ARE WE TO THE CONVENIENCE AND PLEASURE GIVEN BY MOTOR CARS, THAT MOST OF US DO NOT REALIZE THE CHANGES THEY HAVE CAUSED WITHIN THE TIME THAT EVEN YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN CAN REMEMBER.

–"AUTOMOBILES," FROM* THE SOURCE BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA *(1926)



UNHEALTHY OCCUPATION

by Adam Gauntlett

in which an offer of employment leads to a foe of many faces

Styvessant's Folly is deserted. Elizabeth Styvessant, last of that line, is dead and buried. Though there are some probate difficulties—Elizabeth's nephew, Horace Styvessant-Wilcox, is contesting the terms of the will on the grounds of alleged insanity on the part of the testator—the lawyers in charge of the estate, Bradley Parker & Sons, have finally begun to assess the value of Elizabeth's remaining possessions. To that end they have hired experts to examine and catalogue the extensive library of Elizabeth's father, Martin. The Styvessant Collection (as it is known) is large but eccentric, and has not been kept in good order for many years now. Even without distractions, it should be some time before the specialists finish their task.

Which is unfortunate. Elizabeth Styvessant may be dead, but Styvessant's Folly is not unoccupied...

Investigator Information

The investigators have been recruited by a firm of Virginia lawyers, Bradley Parker & Sons, to evaluate the contents of a library known as The Styvessant Collection. This is being done as part of the preparations for final settlement of the last will and testament of Elizabeth Styvessant, late of Hadden's Brook, Prince Edward County, Virginia. Apparently there was some dispute between the lawyers and a disappointed beneficiary which has delayed the execution of the will, but this seems to have been dealt with. The Collection has not been kept in any kind of order for at least fifty years, but it is rumored to contain some rare and valuable works. The books are still kept at Elysian Fields, the Styvessant family home.

It is expected that the investigators will live at Elysian Fields for the duration of the project. While much of the furniture has been removed, the house is still reasonably comfortable although lacking in amenities (no electricity, antiquated water supply, and the very latest in outdoor toilets—"Best to take an overcoat, it can get powerful cold at night.") and of course Bradley Parker & Sons will do their utmost to make sure that the investigators have all the assistance that they should need to complete their task. Rutger Phipps is the law firm's representative for this matter, and the investigators will be dealing with him exclusively.

Some facts that the investigators might know (Keeper's discretion or Know roll) or ask the law firm's representative about include the following:

- The house is also known as Styvessant's Folly, and is a well-known curiosity.
- The Folly and the Collection were both the brainchildren of Martin Styvessant, Elizabeth's father. The Styvessant family was once prominent in pre-Civil War Virginia society. Martin was sent to Europe for his education, and it is generally believed that his experiences there encouraged his love of the eccentric and unusual.
- In particular, Martin Styvessant loved unusual architecture, as even a cursory examination of Elysian Fields will show. It's often cited as Virginia's answer to the Winchester House and has some of that curious building's features. It is not as complex as the Winchester House, probably because Martin did not spend as much time building it. He started in 1853 and stopped in 1859, when it looked as though civil war was likely to intervene.
- Martin is popularly supposed to have died of a heart attack on hearing the news of the surrender at Appomattox, and his wife Sarah followed him into the grave in 1868. Their daughter Elizabeth never married, preferring to live out her life alone in her father's house.
- The Styvessant Collection consists principally of a rag-tag accumulation of leather-bound classics, musty art portfolios, some other works that Martin picked up in Europe, and a considerable number of occult and mystical works collected towards the end of Martin's life. Rutger Phipps suspects that most of the Collection will be of little value, but Bradley Parker & Sons is duty-bound to provide an accurate account of all of Elizabeth's possessions; and besides, there might be some diamonds amongst the dross.

The pay offered is reasonable (the Keeper should offer whatever amount is deemed suitable) and the work is not particularly arduous. The investigators should enjoy a quiet holiday in the country.

Keeper Information

Naturally, all is not as it seems. The plot is complicated by two red herrings, to be detailed later, but the heart of the matter is discussed here.

Throughout his life, Martin Styvessant enjoyed shocking and perplexing people with his strange tastes and fancies. He married Sarah, a dirt-poor cousin from Louisiana, just because it would upset his elderly grandmother, who incidentally died soon afterward of natural causes. He built his house in the eccentric way he did because the prolonged construction time

would inconvenience Sarah and befuddle his neighbors. He collected books because he liked books, but he collected esoteric occult manuscripts because he knew it would annoy the local minister. So it could be said that Martin signed his death warrant on a whim, because one of the magical tomes that he bought carried with it a very unusual taint.

The Collected Works of Canon Ribaud is magically bound to the life energies of a powerful supernatural guardian, an entity that was trapped centuries ago by Canon Ribaud to serve as protector for Ribaud's work. When Martin bought the book, he also bought the beast. The entity took great pleasure in blighting Martin's life; rather than killing Martin outright, it preferred to terrorize him relentlessly. The activities of this creature led to a local bit of folklore regarding a spirit known as Martin's Devil (see p. 71) but it soon learned subtlety and began quietly to undermine Martin's sanity without attracting the attention of the outside world.

Throughout the whole of this period (1858 to 1865) no one, not even Sarah or Elizabeth, saw or heard the creature except Martin. This thing lives on fear, and can mold its shape and persona to suit the idiosyncrasies of the target—so for seven years Martin Styvessant lived through the same kind of hell he had delighted in inflicting on others. The experience broke his sanity and his health. As Martin lay dying, he begged his wife to guard their daughter, though he could not make Sarah understand from what she was to save Elizabeth.

Sarah found out soon enough. The Beast's attentions were so inventive that before long she was reduced to a paranoid wreck, afraid to leave the house even for a moment for fear that it would exact a terrible revenge. The pressure was far too much for her to bear, and she died in a paroxysm of terror in 1868. Then the creature began to work on Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was particularly vulnerable. She had an overwhelming fear of one thing: the much-feared Southern notion of the Big Black Rapist. It took great delight in inflicting every possible desecration that Elizabeth could think of. Like her mother before her, she lived alone in her father's house, afraid to leave in case the spirit inflicted even worse torments in revenge. Nevertheless, she hoped that one day she would be able to free herself from it, and to that end she stole the *Collected Works* (which the creature had hidden away in the house and then forgotten about) and studied it, trying to find a way out of her situation. Thus armed, she managed to cut the connection between the beast and the book, and then sealed it in the cellar for good (she hoped).

The beast had the last word on the subject, however; Elizabeth gave birth to a son, Stephen, in 1903, fathered by the beast before his imprisonment. Stephen, as might have been expected, resembled his

The Collected Works of Canon Ribaud

This is a unique octavo volume bound in cracked and fading brown leather. Some of the pages are a little loose and could fall out if the book is treated roughly. Part of the work consists of handwritten entries and records of occult experiments by occultist Canon Ribaud himself, written in French; the grammar and style indicate that it was penned circa 1600, probably no later than 1650. A minimum of 60% skill in French is needed to understand it.

However, the vast majority of the book consists of clippings and pages from other books, which Canon Ribaud presumably plundered. Some are in Latin (40% skill needed), some in Greek (50% skill), and some few alchemical records are in Arabic (60% skill). There are also several color plates, depicting scenes that no sane man would want to contemplate. The whole work, if completely understood (all language checks made), confers 8% Cthulhu Mythos and 4% Occult upon the reader. If not completely understood, only 4% and 2% are gained. The spell modifier is x3. The SAN loss to skim is 1D3; to read is 1D4+1 if not fully understood; to read and fully understand is 1D6+2.

The main theme of the tome is the acquisition of wealth and power, together with the (supernaturally enhanced) long life to enjoy it. There are other gems hidden in the text: for example, one of the best-preserved sections of the Arabic scraps includes a blow-by-blow account (with illustrations, unfortunately) of the dissection of a Deep One. Apparently the writer was attempting to glean some insight regarding their longevity. The Keeper should feel free to insert other useful passages as he sees fit.

Spells include: Elder Sign, Voorish Sign, Command Ghost, Mental Suggestion, Create Scrying Window. There are also incomplete notes that suggest that the author was attempting to formulate a reliable version of the Resurrection spell, but there is no record of the result.

Quote: "And I asked, Is it here? It answered, Of a certainty. I asked, Shall I find it? And the answer was Thou wilt. I asked, Shall I die in my bed? But as to that it did not reply…"

father enough that Elizabeth dared not let the rest of Hadden's Brook know he existed. She decided to devote the rest of her life to Stephen, and to provide for him after she was gone.

In the years after the beast was locked away, family life in the Styvessant household was unusual to say the least. Elizabeth, once terrified at the sight of a black man, now showed such a passionate hatred for them that even the local white townsfolk were impressed. Local blacks were driven from her with blows and curses; while, unknown to the rest of Hadden's Brook, Elizabeth amused herself in private by luring young black transients to her house and, with Stephen's help, torturing and abusing them to death.

Stephen, meanwhile, was having some very disturbing dreams. The Beast, locked away in the cellar, was trying to persuade Stephen to free him, and to that end told Stephen much about his heritage and about some of the powers that Stephen could access. Stephen, however, was incapable of learning as men learn, and so he could not use the *Collected Works* to free his father as Elizabeth had used them to trap it. Consequently the beast taught Stephen the power that is now Stephen's main characteristic. Although Stephen cannot learn anything himself, if he should eat another sentient being's brain Stephen will graft onto himself that being's knowledge and part of its personality. This graft is manifested by a small extra face that will grow on Stephen's body. The trick is that Stephen then has to deal with another personality as well as his own—which can lead to difficulty since to date Stephen has acquired six extra faces and plans to eat even more brains to accomplish his goals.

Elizabeth died suddenly in 1918. She had planned to leave the Styvessant fortune to a cousin, Mary Pickens, whom she dominated absolutely. The money was Mary's on condition that she kept Elysian Fields in reasonable repair, that Mary never lived there, and that she made regular deliveries of food to the house. (Horace Styvessant-Wilcox made these strange conditions part of his case to have the will overruled on the basis of Elizabeth's insanity.) Stephen, Elizabeth hoped, would live out his life in solitude, which she felt was best both for Stephen and for the world in general. However, the best-laid plans of mice and insane old women oft go astray—Stephen is about to have to deal with some very unwanted guests.

Hadden's Brook

The investigators will probably choose to arrive by train. If they insist on driving to Hadden's Brook the Keeper is at liberty to get them just as lost as he pleases, since the town is only a small (approximately twelve thousand people at last count) rural backwater, with no real connection to the road network to speak of. However, there is a good (and brand new) rail depot serving the town; the local dignitaries have been trying to drum up support for Hadden's fledgling lumber mill and there is talk of a furniture factory. Consequently the land around the train station is torn and scarred, ripped apart to make way for the new businesses (all housed in freshly painted white clapboard shacks) that service the railroad.

Rutger Phipps has promised to meet the investigators and show them Elysian Fields, but when they arrive he is nowhere to be found. The train station is a confused mass of lumber, sweating workers, and swearing overseers; the best place to wait for him is the dry goods store across the street, and indeed there is already a knot of people gathered on its porch. Most are travellers of one kind or another. Three salesmen gossip loudly over by the cracker barrel, while a young, respectable, and painfully polite woman tries to scold her two children into line. Some are locals, and these people have a particular interest in the investigators.

The reception the investigators get is extremely cold. Omerod McAfee, the owner of the store, pointedly refuses to serve them anything without being asked repeatedly. Several burly young farmers just stare menacingly at them. One, a rusty-haired, red-faced young man with what seems to be a permanent scowl engraved on his sour face, swaggers up. After making sure that the investigators are the ones who will be working at Elysian Fields, he proceeds to warn them off, jabbing at them with his finger to emphasize his points. "You just keep your eyes shut," he says, "And nothing untoward will happen. We don't like people who interfere in local matters. Specially not any damn carpetbaggers from up [insert derogatory remark about character's home town here] way. You hear?" Rutger Phipps will show up at a strategic moment (*i.e.*, before anyone gets hit and/or shot) and usher the investigators away.

(What's up with this scene? The tough guy who accosted them is named Willis Killferny, and he's got an agenda unrelated to the events about to unfold at Elysium Fields. His actions form a red herring that the investigators can follow or ignore as they wish; see the boxed text on pp. 72–73 for details.)

Phipps drives the investigators to Elysian Fields. On the way he will show them the sights: the statue commemorating the Civil War (a Confederate soldier on post; "There's talk of putting up another monument for Our Boys who fought in the Great War as well."); the lumber mill ("Lot of folks run their lives by that mill."); the town hall ("It also does duty as a

courthouse when Judge Pritchard is in town. And Gifford has his office there all year round."). Any landmark that the Keeper wants to add should be mentioned here. Before long Rutger heads out into the countryside, past field after field after field. "Used to be folks grew up on cotton. Then it was tobacco. These days people don't grow much of anything but rocks."

Eventually Rutger drives up to Elysian Fields itself, a sprawling lump of a house with little grace or beauty to it. It resembles nothing so much as it does a large, ungainly hound squatting against the sky. Parked in front of the house is a dented but serviceable Ford. Rutger explains that the car is for the investigators. "Thought you'd probably appreciate something to get you from here to the store at least. Seeing as you already met our only mechanic, it'd probably be a good idea not to dent her too much more than she already is. He's the one I borrowed her from." A Spot Hidden check is required just as the investigators are about to go inside the house. The one who makes it (and at least one person ought to be allowed to) sees an indistinct humanoid form up at one of the second floor windows. As soon as it is seen, this figure will dart back into hiding. A thorough search of the house will not find anyone, and Rutger does not believe there was ever anyone there. After all, he has the only key to the house.

Elysian Fields

The house is a large brown graceless structure. It's inner geography is odd, since Martin Styvessant deliberately built it to confuse and to annoy. The most dominant features of the building are its three towers, one looking to the east, one to the south, and one to the west. Each tower extends a full floor above the rest of the building (which is three stories high at its greatest extent) and one, the south tower, is apparently not accessible by any means, although from the outside it looks as though it is a normal part of the house. (Stephen Styvessant, wise in the ways of his grandfather's house, knows the secret of the south tower—it can only be accessed by means of a subterranean passage which is itself accessed by a secret door that runs off of one of the servant's corridors. He lives in that tower).

The house's features include: one long corridor that runs the length of the building, from east to west, that starts on ground level and works its way upwards without doors or exits by so gentle a gradient that until you look out of the second floor window at the end of the corridor you would not believe you were travelling up at all; three doors that open to blank walls, and two (both on the second floor) that open into empty air; two seeming cupboards that open into rooms; a staircase in the West Tower that runs up, and then down again, without any exit or destination; and three separate studies, all identically furnished, each one next to the other. Besides the strange floor plan, the house is decorated in a peculiar style. The furnishings and even the wallpaper are a mishmash of styles: Polynesian wicker chairs straddle a Chippendale bureau, black wallpaper surrounds a room full of white furniture (the sitting room), and so on. Finally, the doors are all hung at a slight angle, so that they usually swing shut by themselves if left open.

Apart from these oddities there are several features of the house that deserve mention. First, there are the servant's corridors. In order that he might not be disturbed by his attendants, Martin Styvessant built special corridors for them, each one linking the rest of the house with the kitchen. These corridors have concealed entrances and exits, so that for each bedroom, study, the library, and the dining room there is what amounts to a secret corridor which links each room with the others and all with the kitchen. These corridors are quite narrow, and anyone over six feet tall will have to stoop to use them, but they make an excellent route for anyone who wants to move about the house without being seen.

In addition to these there are Martin's crawlways. Martin Styvessant, paranoid to the last, shortened the height of each servant's corridor so that above them there is a small crawl space, which a slight, agile man could use to spy on the servants. These crawlways go everywhere the servant's corridors go, but only a small man can use them effectively. Stephen will use these to spy on the new inhabitants of the house. The crawlways have access hatches at the end of each servant's corridor, and spyholes along each corridor's length, but these are well-hidden. A successful Spot Hidden check reveals a servant's corridor if someone bothers to look for one, but only a Spot Hidden at half chance will detect a crawlway. Rutger Phipps knows about the servant's corridors, though he does not know the full extent of all of them, but will not mention them unless asked. He thinks that if the investigators know about the corridors they will try to find them and probably get lost in the process which he does not want. Rutger does not know about the crawlways.

The Hidden Rooms

There are also three hidden rooms. One of these can only be entered via the servant's corridor that leads

to the library. It has little furniture. There are three bottles of Scotch here as well as a copy of a book list, and the room reeks of cigar smoke; it is being used by Horace Styvessant, the jealous nephew who tried to contest Elizabeth's will. He is hiding out in the mansion and trying to steal some valuable books; he is another red herring, and is discussed on p. 70.

A second secret room was used by Elizabeth as a private chamber. This room is on the second floor, and only has one entrance which opens onto the long, sloping passage mentioned earlier. The walls of this room are covered with photographs and newspaper cuttings that reflect Elizabeth's passion in the later years of her life: lynching. From snapshots of corpses to proud editorials defending "The Southern Point of View" she has it all, with at least one example from every state in the Confederacy and several from Virginia. Studying the entire collection costs 1 SAN. Searching through this collection will turn up six photographs that look more amateurish than the rest; an investigator making a Know roll will recognize features that indicate these pictures were taken in Styvessant's Folly (1D2 SAN). Elizabeth took these as mementoes of the three boys she killed. One of these shots, badly blurred, features Stephen Styvessant. A SAN check is required as the investigator realizes that, despite the blurring, whatever "it" is it cannot have been human. SAN loss is 0/1D3.

The third hidden room is actually the entirety of the south tower, where Stephen Styvessant lives. The room is quite large, but seems smaller thanks to the jumble of junk that Stephen has collected over the years. The walls are covered with drawings and scribbles. Crude but loving portraits of Elizabeth are present, but the walls are dominated by more menacing, less clear shapes which Stephen has labeled "Father." There are also simplistic copies of the Elder Sign which holds Stephen's father in the cellar. These days Stephen is not often found here; keeping tabs on the interlopers keeps him busy, and he sometimes has to forage for food in the kitchen. Amongst the junk there are some personal possessions of the people Stephen has devoured; for example, a set of mint condition bibles, a watch inscribed "B. Powers—25 April 1901," an odd set of left shoes and boots, and so on.

The Library

Last but not least there is the library. This large and comfortable room is at the very center of the house. There are no windows and since there is no electricity the library has to be lit by candlelight, which makes it seem gloomy and full of shadows. The books are not kept in any kind of order. While most are still on the shelves, some have been moved about and piled up on desktops or in the corners of the room. The most valuable books are supposed to be kept in a large dark wood cabinet with an elaborate glass front that dominates the western wall of the room, to which Rutger has the only key, which he will give to the investigators. There are about thirty-five bookcases and between fifty and a hundred books per bookcase.

Incidentally, six of the more valuable books have been piled neatly together on a large plush chair near the center of the room, almost as though someone has been deliberately gathering them together. Disgruntled nephew Horace Styvessant did this, but he didn't have the chance to sneak them away with him. If Horace is not caught early on, these six volumes will soon disappear when the investigators aren't around.

Remember that there is a servant's corridor attached to this room, behind one of the bookcases. Horace and/or Stephen can use this to good effect.

The Cellar

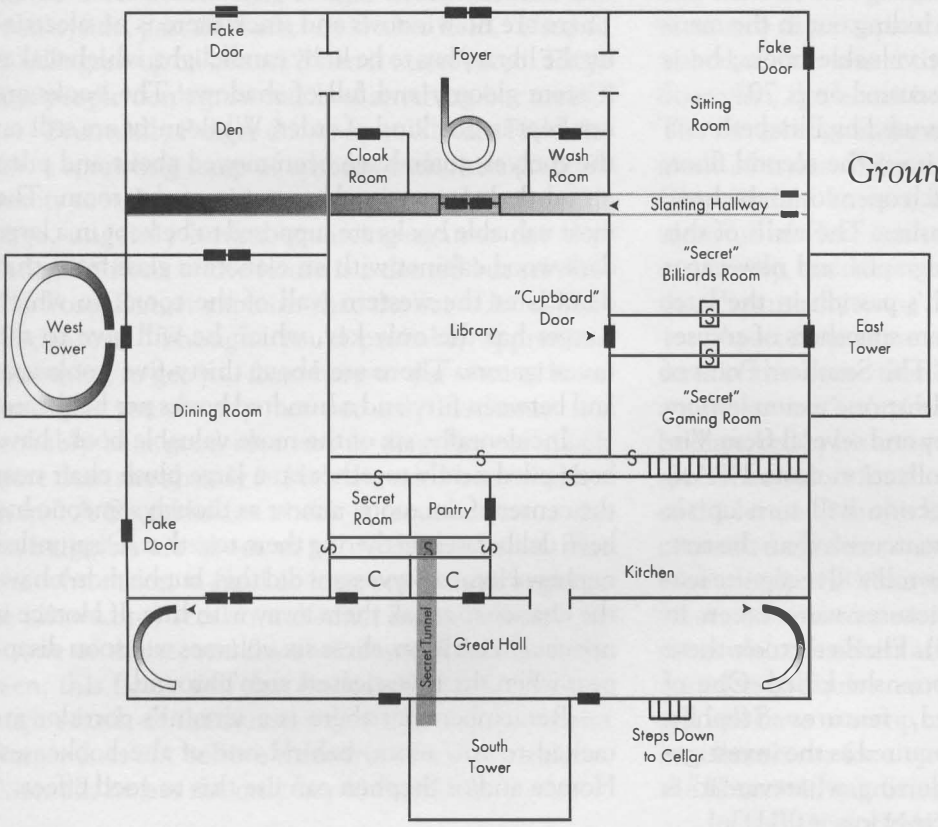
Eventually, paranoid investigators are going to want to search the cellar. The only way in is from outside the house: there are some steps at the rear of the building leading down to a solid-looking door that Rutger thinks is guarded by a strong padlock. In fact, Stephen broke that lock months ago but he was cunning enough to leave it on the door so that from a distance it still looks intact, though anyone trying to get in will have no difficulty.

The cellar is large, dark and humid, a natural breeding ground for rats. The southern wall of the cellar is of more recent construction than the rest, though to realize that someone would first have to move several boxes and bits of old lumber that Stephen has carefully piled up against it. Etched into

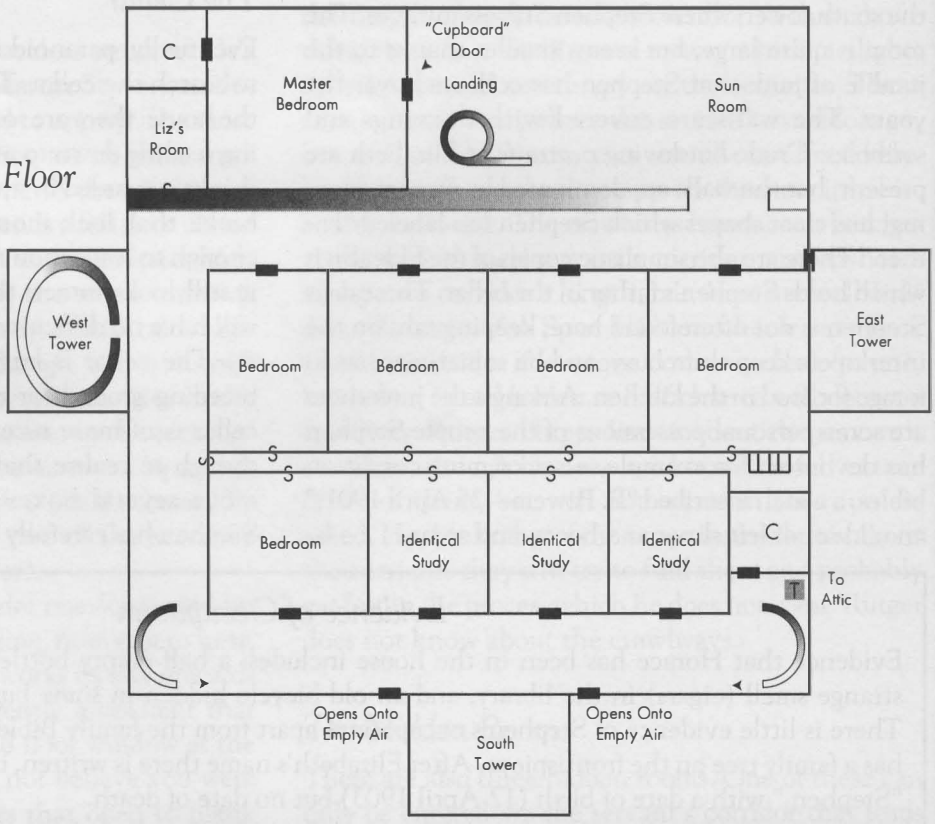
Evidence of Occupation

Evidence that Horace has been in the house includes: a half-empty bottle of scotch in the kitchen, a strange smell (cigars) in the library, and an old bicycle hidden in some bushes not far from the house. There is little evidence of Stephen's occupation, apart from the family Bible (kept in the library), which has a family tree on the frontispiece. After Elizabeth's name there is written, in much shakier handwriting, "Stephen," with a date of birth (12 April 1903) but no date of death.

Elysian Fields

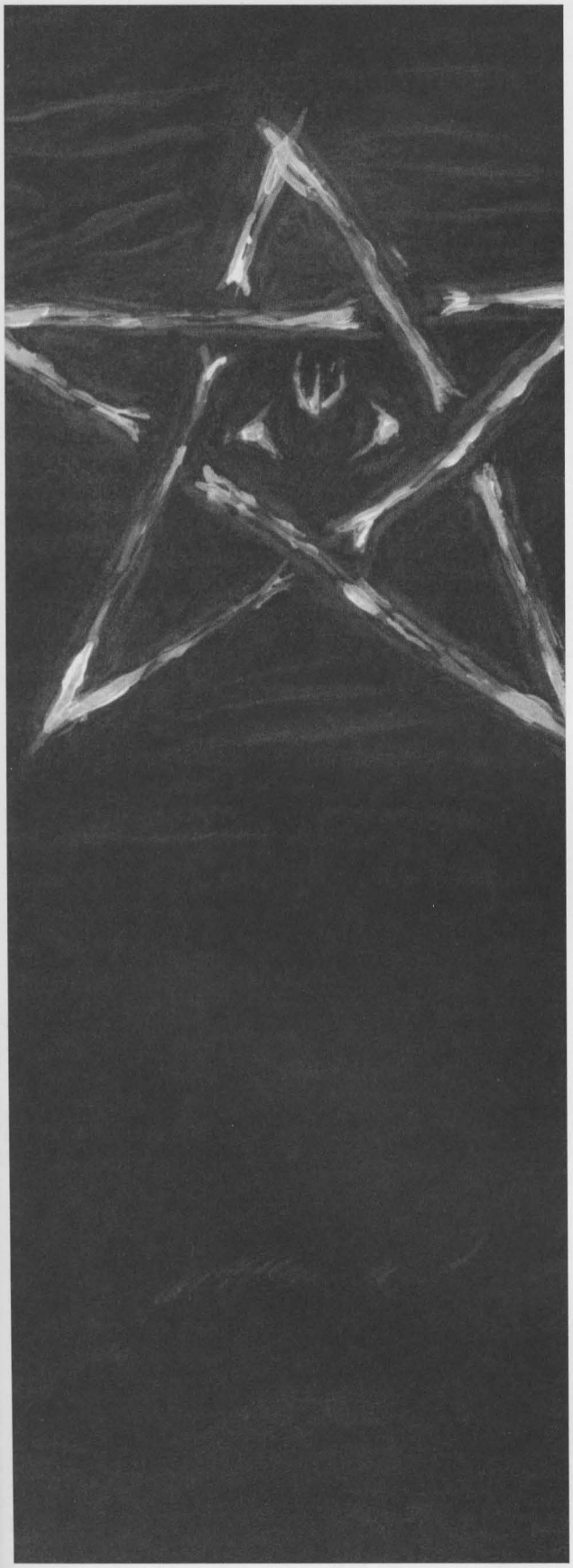


Ground Floor



Upper Floor

that wall, hidden behind the boxes, is a five-pointed star—an Elder Sign, as anyone with Cthulhu Mythos can tell. This Elder Sign is impervious to destruction except by a ritual in the *Collected Works*, as it is tailored specifically for the beast. It is behind this wall that Elizabeth Styvessant trapped Stephen's father. While in this condition the beast can do very little except through influencing Stephen, though it can enrage the rats in the cellar sufficiently to get them to swarm (forming five packs) and attack anyone in the cellar area. Naturally, if it seems as though it is about to be freed it will remain very quiet and submissive—until the Elder Sign goes down.



Also in the cellar are the six bodies of Stephen's victims, buried four feet under the earthen floor. The latest one (Billy Winters) is only three weeks old, so that the whole cellar is pervaded with a sickly, rotting stench. Each corpse has had its skull shattered, and close examination will reveal what look like teeth marks around the brain pan; 1/1D4+1 SAN loss to dig up and examine the bodies. Stephen Styvessant often comes here in the dead of night to sleep and dream of his father. It is from these dreams that the beast is able to communicate with Stephen and tell him what to do.

The Job

Cataloguing the entire collection will take approximately three weeks, and, as Rutger expected, there is little of any real value here. The occult section (to which most investigators will make for as soon as Rutger leaves, no doubt) is particularly uninspiring, since Martin only really collected occult works to irritate the local minister.

Among other titles there is *The Oracles of Nostradamus* and *The Key of Solomon*. Each edition is in relatively good condition—no member of the family has even looked at them before—and some of the more mundane works, mainly poetry and literature, are quite valuable. The most expensive book is worth about $2,000 (*Philosophy of Mercantilism* by Johannes Boech, quarto-bound in dark wine-red leather, near-mint condition, from the 1700s).

(If the Keeper needs to place any books into the campaign for use in future scenarios, this could be a good opportunity to do so innocuously. The law firm will certainly entertain fair offers from the investigators for books in the Styvessant Collection.)

Each day, the investigators will need to catalog every work in the Styvessant Collection, noting title, author, publisher, bookcase number (since they're no longer alphabetized), and date of publication. Any books that look as if they might be of particular value should be recorded and set aside, to decrease the

chance that a bulk sale of the books will result in some pearls slipping out amidst the dross.

Stephen's Plan

Stephen Styvessant wants his father back. Since he is convinced that in order to do so he has to break the power of the Elder Sign magically, and since he cannot learn spells himself, he has resorted to devouring other personalities in the hopes that among their skills he will also gain the necessary magical powers to help him complete his task. His first three victims were young black boys that his mother had lured onto the property and murdered for pleasure: Stoke Finney, Rafe Hops and Eddie Parlane. Each of these were "practice runs." All are now completely insane, and had few skills in life. Next was Halford Julip, a travelling Baptist bible salesman that Stephen ate because Julip annoyed him. Then there was Byron Powers, a would-be suitor of Elizabeth Styvessant; rather than have a stepfather, Stephen ate him too. These two, particularly Byron, had more intelligence and more skills, but were not acquired as part of Stephen's plans. Last was Billy Winter, just home from the Great War. Stephen kidnapped him, showed him the *Collected Works*, flicked through the pages briefly so that Billy could see them, and then ate Billy's brains. The experiment was not a success, but it taught Stephen that people had to have more time to study the book before he could hope to gain anything from them.

Of all of the personalities that now inhabit Stephen Styvessant, only Byron Powers is of any interest as he is stronger-willed and more energetic than the rest. Even when Stephen is asleep, the faces in his flesh gather around Stephen's chest, muttering amongst themselves, and act as separate entities. Byron Powers, a staunch, stubborn, tough-as-nails Virginian, wants to gain control over Stephen on a permanent basis—after all, half a life is better than none—and is constantly burbling on Stephen's shoulder (or on his right cheek if Byron can get there; the personality power struggle is often marked by the location of the extra face on Stephen's body, the higher the better), offering advice and encouragement, looking for that moment of weakness when Byron can make his take-over bid.

Stephen's plan is simple enough. He knows that an appeal running along the lines of "Read this so that I can eat your brains," is probably doomed to failure. He intends to hide in the bowels of the house, only venturing out when no one else is around. He will leave the *Collected Works* around in places where someone is bound to find it. An investigator might come across it in the library, for example, and leave it there, only to find when he goes to bed that somehow the *Works* have travelled from the library to his bedside table, and so on. Once Stephen feels that a person has had sufficient time to read and understand the book, it's time for dinner.

Naturally Stephen does not want the *Works* to leave the house for any reason. Stephen is frightened of the outside world, since Elizabeth taught him that it is full of demons and evil things. If an investigator should leave Elysian Fields with the tome then Stephen, absolutely terrified, will set off in pursuit. If he can catch his victim before he leaves Hadden's Brook, so much the better. Once Stephen has caught up with the book-thief Stephen will kill him without mercy, devour his brains, and then go back to Elysian Fields again.

Before Stephen grew his extra heads he might just have been thought bizarre. His face is lumpen and craggy, his body small and thin (though wiry with muscle). The extra faces make him look completely inhuman: 0/1D6 SAN to see him. Stephen never understood the concept of clothes, though Elizabeth did manage to teach him that they were important. When she was alive he made an effort to look neat, but these days he is as likely to wear his shirt in place of his trousers as wear anything at all. He rarely bathes, so that he gives off an unpleasant stench that might warn alert investigators before it is too late. He does know Elysian Fields intimately however, which is a great advantage.

Horace's Plan

Rutger is wrong. Horace Styvessant-Wilcox also has a key to the house which he stole from Elizabeth when she still lived here. It was Horace that the investigators saw in the upstairs window. When Horace's case was dismissed by an outraged Judge Pritchard ("How *dare* you insinuate that one of our most respected citizens was in any way mentally unstable?"), Horace, deep in debt and desperate to avoid the attentions of a particularly malevolent loan shark, hatched what he felt to be a cunning plan.

Horace knows that of all the house's most valuable contents only the books are still kept at Elysian Fields—the rest have been removed for sale or distribution to relatives and townsfolk. Horace knows almost nothing about books, but he has a friend in New York who does. That friend gave Horace a shopping list and Horace got to work. He had to sneak onto the property, since he is well known and disliked in Hadden's Brook as a result of his recent court challenge, and has spent the last day meandering through the library. He made the mistake of drink-

ing one shot too many of bootleg Scotch the night before, and only woke up when he heard Rutger drive up to the door with the investigators in tow. Panicking, he tried to hide all evidence that he had ever been there before hiding himself.

Horace knows the house reasonably well, certainly better than the investigators do. He can use all of the hidden servant's corridors, and knows where there is a hidden room that he can bed down in. He dare not make too much noise while the investigators are here, but is afraid to go back to New York empty-handed. So far he has found nothing very valuable in the library, but he hasn't had much chance to search it yet. Every night while the investigators sleep Horace will creep into the Library, list in hand, hoping to hit the jackpot.

Before long, what with footsteps that no one can trace (Horace walking unseen down one of the servant's corridors), things moving and going missing without apparent human intervention (Horace will need food as well as books, and is likely to steal anything valuable left unattended), and strange smells (Horace loves his scotch and his Cuban cigars—he could easily spill some scotch in the library, or leave tell-tale smoke in the kitchen), the investigators may be convinced they are dealing with a particularly odd poltergeist. ("Is the ghost of Martin Styvessant smoking cigars?")

Stephen & Horace

Horace's presence fits in nicely with Stephen's plans, at least at first. Stephen knows the house much better than Horace does, and can hide without being noticed by anyone. Stephen needs someone to read his book. Horace will do. At first Stephen will just leave the *Collected Works* somewhere where Horace can find it. Horace will look at it and dismiss it as worthless; it isn't on his list, and anyway it looks too tattered to be important. Disappointed, Stephen will start leaving the *Collected Works* in places where the investigators can't miss it. Two days pass, probably with the investigators getting more and more confused and annoyed at their unknown persecutor. Then Horace manages to escape and make his way into town, where he will send a telegram to his bibliophile friend in New York. Among other things he will ask about the *Collected Works*; is it valuable? "My God, yes!" is the enthusiastic reply, and Horace sets off back to the mansion to steal the book. If he is successful he will attempt to leave with it, which will enrage Stephen who will then kill Horace.

If this all happens behind "closed walls," in the servant's corridors and hidden parts of the mansion, it could become very frustrating for the investigators. First odd sounds, then strange smells, then things go missing, the *Collected Works* keeps turning up like the proverbial bad penny, and finally a large pool of blood forms on the front doorstep once Stephen kills Horace. Ideally the investigators should intervene at some point—perhaps one of them wakes up in the middle of the night and catches Horace in the act— but that is up to them. Remember, even if Horace is caught he still has his key so that unless he is handed over to Chief Gifford he can still cause the investigators grief.

Rumors and Facts

Once the investigators realize that something odd is going on, they will probably want to track down old newspapers, read books on local history, talk to the citizens of Hadden's Brook, and otherwise gather information. Here is a sampling of what they might find out from talking to various folks in town. The Keeper should work these tidbits into conversations with NPCs; you don't have to use them all.

"Martin Styvessant died on hearing of the surrender at Appomattox." This is false. His tombstone (he is buried on the grounds of Elysian Fields, along with Sarah and Elizabeth) quite clearly indicates that he died almost two weeks beforehand. The two events just got mixed up in local memory.

"Martin Styvessant was plagued by a spirit as Elysian Fields was being built." True. This was the initial manifestation of the beast, which became known locally as Martin's Devil. It is supposed to have faded away after a while, though in fact it just became more covert.

"Sarah Styvessant haunts Elysian Fields." False. This rumor grew up partly because no local thought that she died happily or peacefully (true enough), and partly because Elizabeth shut herself away in the house for so long afterward.

"Elizabeth Styvessant hated blacks with a passion." True. Most of the local townsfolk rather admired her spirit because of this, though people who saw her frenzied verbal assaults on black males had to wonder just how sane she really was.

"Elizabeth spent most of the first half of her life in Elysian Fields, hardly ever coming out, but around the time McKinley was shot she became much more active in the local community." True enough. Before 1903 she was constrained by the beast; after that year it was trapped in the cellar and she was free to live her life in her own peculiar fashion.

"Horace Styvessant-Wilcox is a sneaking, simpering, backstabbing little blackguard." No one in Hadden's Brook has a good word to say about Horace. Many resent him for slandering the old lady after her death.

Red Herring: The Lynching

Remember the guy who accosted the investigators in front of the general store? That was Willis Killferny, a hot-headed young man and the town's only mechanic. Recently, Willis has been having some difficulty with a young black ex-serviceman named Talbot Vine. Talbot bought a second-hand car from Willis, only to find that Willis had sold him a lemon that treated every molehill as though it were Mount Everest. It expired before Talbot could get it home. Talbot, outraged, walked into town the next day to complain but before he got there he met Willis' wife, Beatrice. A cold "good morning" swiftly degenerated into a hot "God Damn!" and before many minutes passed Beatrice fled weeping to her husband's side. Talbot suddenly realized what he was getting himself into and went home again, but the damage was done.

By now local rumour has transformed the quarrel into assault, if not attempted rape. Willis has sworn he will get his revenge, and together with a half dozen of his cronies has been scouring the countryside looking for Talbot, who, wise after the fact, is in hiding. Once Willis finds Talbot he is almost certainly going to kill him, after first beating him senseless and cutting off whatever portions of Talbot's anatomy Willis deems appropriate. Traditionally such matters are taken care of on Martin's Hill, a rocky patch of land donated to the county long ago by Martin Styvessant for public use. The Hill is quiet, isolated, and private: perfect for what Willis has in mind.

The only snag in Willis' plan is that Martin's Hill is only a few miles away from Elysian Fields. You can see the Hill quite clearly from the front door of the Folly. When Elizabeth was alive this did not matter, since everyone knew she approved of the lynchings on the Hill. Now things are different. Nobody knew the Folly was going to be occupied until the morning of the investigator's arrival, when Rutger Phipps told Omerod McAfee he was expecting visitors on the afternoon train, and why he was expecting them. Willis has no intention of giving up his little "picnic" just to please some nosy interlopers. He does not know when he will catch Talbot, but when he does he intends to hold the festivities on the Hill as usual. He hopes that if he intimidates the strangers sufficiently they will not intervene when they see fires on Martin's Hill.

For four days Willis will hunt Talbot the length and breadth of Hadden's Brook. During that time, at the Keeper's discretion, the investigators may be harassed by local bullies trying to prove how tough they are. This is even more likely if the investigators leave the mansion for any reason. Harassment can range from thrown stones crashing through the window as the investigators settle down for breakfast, to chasing them down the narrow country lanes with fists and shouts, and could escalate into beatings or even gunplay—

"Willis Killferny is a good lad at heart." So he is, by local standards. When the investigators arrive Haddon's Brook is on edge, needlessly terrified that a race riot might break out, and the citizens condone Willis' actions against poor Talbot Vine (see "Red Herring: The Lynching" on above) because they feel them to be necessary to keep the blacks in their place.

"Elizabeth Styvessant haunts Elysian Fields." False, though it's the only explanation that the neighbors can come up with to explain why Elizabeth stipulated that no one should live in Elysian Fields after her death. Only Rutger Phipps and the other lawyers at Bradley Parker know that Mary, Elizabeth's heir, has to make regular deliveries of food to the house, and those worthies don't care to speculate as to why Elizabeth should have wanted Mary to do that.

"Elizabeth never married, though she did have one suitor." True. Her admirer was Byron Powers as noted earlier. Folks still talk about how Byron up and left town one night without a word to anyone. His business collapsed soon afterward; maybe that was why.

Playing it Out

This scenario is very loosely structured, and the course of play will be determined by the interactions of three agents: the investigators, Stephen, and Horace. The plans of Stephen and Horace have been enumerated already, and running this scenario successfully boils down to understanding the goals of these two men and putting them through their paces.

The intention of the scenario is to make the investigators think the house is haunted—hence the secret passages, the footsteps, and so on. The secretive, mysterious actions of Stephen and Horace should make the house seem quite haunted indeed.

Horace is meant to serve as something of a false climax. Odds are good that the investigators will catch him in the act, since they'll probably stake out the library overnight at some point. Horace can be chased off, arrested, or dealt with in some fashion, at which point the investigators are liable to take a deep breath, pat each other on the back, and go back to work. That's when certain phenomena, such as the move-

but only if the investigators attack them first. If the investigators ever catch sight of their tormentors, all they will see are burly young men with flour sacks hiding their faces. (The Keeper may choose to unsettle the players by suggesting the men aren't human: imagine seeing nothing but a white shapeless face on a dark evening.) On the evening of the fourth day, (or whenever the Keeper wants), Willis will catch Talbot and the festivities will commence.

First, there will be fires lit on the Hill at about 9PM. Willis and his friends will spend several happy hours tormenting Talbot. If the wind is right, the investigators might hear Talbot's anguished screams interspersed with harsh laughter and curses. If the investigators spend a long time watching they will see strange flashes of light at irregular intervals; some clever soul brought his camera and wants a few pictures for his album. If the investigators do nothing but watch, around midnight the party will draw to a close with an almighty yell as Talbot is strung up. A half-hearted attempt will be made to burn the body (the investigators should be able to smell it where they are) and after Willis and his friends finish congratulating each other on a job well done they will go home. The next morning, only the blind could miss seeing Talbot's battered, mutilated, and partially burned corpse. A SAN loss of 1/1D6+1 for any chicken-hearted investigators who let this happen without doing anything is appropriate, unless the investigators are like-minded bigots.

The investigators can intervene at any time. If they do, unless they make an effort to sneak up on the group, Willis and his six friends will have scattered and hidden before the investigators get to the Hill. If this happens the investigators will only see a bonfire, a truck (Willis') and Talbot, bruised and bloody, leaning against a tree. A successful Spot Hidden will reveal the shadowy forms of Willis and his cronies hiding behind large rocks and trees. A particularly good roll (less than half that needed for success) and the investigator concerned will see moonlight glinting on the barrel of a gun. All seven are armed (see p. 75 for details) and willing to snipe if not to fight fairly. Willis' sarcastic voice floats out of the gloom: "You have business here?" If a fight develops and the investigators seem determined to stick it out Willis and his friends will probably run, especially if one or two of them get hurt or shot. However, the Keeper should bear in mind that at the beginning the locals have the upper hand, hidden out of range of the bonfire light behind good cover, and that they badly want Talbot dead. They are willing to skirmish, and so long as they are winning they will continue the fight. The Keeper should also bear in mind that if any white man dies as a result of the investigators' interference then Chief Gifford will have to get involved, which might not suit the investigators if they were the ones doing the killing. Nevertheless, if Talbot is rescued the investigators gain 1D4 SAN.

ment of the *Collected Works*, will eerily persist and undermine the investigators' confidence, setting the stage for a showdown with Stephen.

A good chunk of play will almost certainly consist of the investigators exploring the house. Draw them a map as they go, but don't reveal the empty spaces where the secret corridors and rooms are. Just draw the map as if all the walls meet up flush; only if the investigators are careful, look closely, and take measurements should you redraw the map to show the missing spaces. Their best tip-off will almost certainly be the kitchen pantry and the closets off the great hall; these three little rooms bracket the secret room where Horace is staying. Draw the map initially as if the closets are flush against the pantry and the pantry is flush against the dining room and library. The investigators are unlikely to look too closely at the pantry at first, but once their suspicions are aroused you can call for Idea rolls to realize that something doesn't add up—the pantry is only as deep as the right closet in the great hall is wide, and that leaves the space behind the left closet unaccounted for!

In playtesting, the investigators found the servants' corridors and surprised Horace as he lay sleeping in the secret room. They packed him off to the cops, but they didn't find the crawlways above the servant's corridors or the secret tunnel to the south tower. One investigator read enough of the *Collected Works* to satisfy Stephen, and when the investigator came back from looking into the lynching, Stephen ambushed him in the front yard and decapitated him on the spot. The other investigator, wondering why it was taking so long for his friend to get out of the car and come inside, found the headless corpse on the porch. He jumped in the car and fled screaming, never to return, leaving a gleeful Stephen behind to free his father and live happily ever after.

Hopefully your group will do better!

Conclusion

There has been no description given here of Stephen's father, nor will there be. If it should escape the Keeper should design whatever creature suits his lurid imagi-

nation. The beast's release could be apocalyptic for the investigators, resulting in death or insanity for the entire group. Or it could simply be a great rush of foul air that rushes out of the cellar and back to wherever it came from. In the event that the beast escapes, tailor the experience so that it is appropriately climactic, and scale the level of threat presented according to what you think will make for the most satisfying and appropriate ending to the tale.

Successfully preventing Horace from looting the Collection is worth 1 SAN; this reward can be boosted if Horace's life is saved, however unwittingly, by the investigators. Neutralizing Stephen is worth 1D6 SAN. If this is done non-violently (unlikely, but possible—perhaps Stephen could be deposited in an insane asylum) this reward can increase to a 1D6+3 SAN.

And that concludes the entertainment for this evening. *Bon appetit!*

NPCs

These are the townsfolk and other NPCs that the investigators are most likely to come across.

Rutger Phipps

STR	10	CON	12	DEX	11	APP	12	SIZ	12
INT	14	POW	10	EDU	15	SAN	50	HP	12

Skills: Bargain 73%, Drive Auto 51%, Law 72%

Phipps is a grey-haired dapper old man (he admits to being 50) with prominent bushy side whiskers. He still likes to think he's as good as he was at age 21. He's genial and polite to all and willing to go out of his way to do someone a favor, but the privacy of his clients is sacred to him and so he is unwilling to gossip about their affairs.

Chief Gifford

STR	15	CON	14	DEX	11	APP	12	SIZ	13
INT	12	POW	9	EDU	12	SAN	45	HP	14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Pistol 47%

Skills: Law 27%, Psychology 36%, Drive Auto 47%

When on duty Gifford carries an old Smith & Wesson .38 revolver (break-open five shot load, 10 HP resistance, 1 shot/round, 1D10 damage) but he isn't comfortable with it. Since Hadden's Brook seems set to grow it was felt that, among other things, the town needed a permanent peace officer. Chief Gifford is the first man ever to hold that post. Still a young man (only 28), he felt it was best for a family man who wasn't much good at farming to take up a more settled post. The regular pay was a powerful incentive. The responsibility of the job awes him a little and he still doesn't know as much about the law as he would like (though he is learning as fast as possible), but he tries to live up to it as best he can. He's willing to tolerate a lynching after the fact, but could be spurred into action if it's not too late to put a stop to it before it happens.

Willis Killferny

STR	14	CON	14	DEX	12	APP	12	SIZ	11
INT	14	POW	11	EDU	12	SAN	55	HP	13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Pistol 62%

Skills: Electrical Repair 44%, Mechanical Repair 73%
If armed, Killferny carries a Colt 1877 Lightning that belonged to his grandfather (.38 caliber revolver, side loading, six-shot capacity, 10 HP resistance, 1 shot/round, 1D10 damage). Willis is short-tempered and aggressive on the best of days. His problems with Talbot Vine have only aggravated this characteristic. The white citizens of Hadden's Brook know him as a likeable enough young man and a good worker, though the blacks murmur that Willis is not above cheating them if he thinks he can get away with it.

Willis' Friends (Lynch Mob)

STR	13	CON	12	DEX	12	APP	10	SIZ	12
INT	10	POW	10	EDU	10	SAN	50	HP	12

Damage Bonus: +1D4
Attacks: Pistol 34%, Rifle 43%
These are average stats; in all other respects they are as normal people. In the lynch scene there are six townspeople, armed as follows: three have Smith & Wesson .38 pistols (like Chief Gifford's), two have Remington 14A Rifles (pump-action, side-loading, five-shot capacity, 10 HP resistance, .25 caliber, 2 shots/round, 1D6+1 damage), and one has a 20-gauge Winchester shotgun (pump-action, side-loading, five-shot capacity, 10 HP resistance, buckshot load, 2D6/1D6/1D3). If any serious fights do take place between the investigators and the locals, apart from the lynch scene, these people should be used as a template. Such activity is not recommended.

Talbot Vine

STR	13	CON	11	DEX	14	APP	12	SIZ	13
INT	12	POW	12	EDU	12	SAN	60	HP	12

Damage Bonus: +1D4 *(HP 5 in lynch scene)*
Skills: Drive Auto 40%, First Aid 45%
Talbot has spent most of his life in Virginia. His family is well known in Haddon's Brook, and his father Garwood is considered a leader of the local black community. However, Talbot's sojourn abroad during the war seems to have given him strange ideas about life in the South; local folks are beginning to complain that "Talbot's gettin' a little too free with his lip, even for a youngster." Popular opinion has it that it won't be long before someone teaches him manners. If the Keeper desires, Talbot could seek refuge with the investigators at the mansion; he might hear about the out-of-towners and hope that they would be more open-minded than the locals and might be willing to help him get away.

Horace Styvessant-Wilcox

STR	9	CON	10	DEX	11	APP	10	SIZ	10
INT	13	POW	13	EDU	14	SAN	65	HP	10

Attacks: Club 35%
Skills: Conceal 43%, Hide 62%, , Listen 47%, Spot Hidden 69%, Sneak 61%
Think Peter Lorré, if you happen t o enjoy old black & white movies—if you don't, just think "slimy little sneak." Horace has never been a well-liked individual. Short, swarthy, pot-bellied and ingratiating, his faded charm is well known (notorious, even) in the seedier dives of New York. Once he realized that he was related to an old (and possibly rich) Virginia family, he flew to Elizabeth's side and all but glued himself to her doorstep in an effort to get his hands on the lucre. Once she died and his claim to the estate was rejected, Horace decided to make one last stab at the "get rich quick" game and rob the house. He wasn't counting on the arrival of the investigators, but he is more afraid of his creditor "friends" in New York than he is of being arrested, even in Hadden's Brook. He doesn't like roughhousing, but if cornered he might well use one of his ever-present bottles of scotch as a makeshift club (1D3 damage; if he attacks from behind with surprise he can stun his target for a 1D6 rounds with a successful hit).

Stephen Styvessant

STR	12/31*	CON	14	DEX	11	APP	4	SIZ	10
INT	**	POW	12/31†	EDU	9	SAN	0	HP	50‡

Damage Bonus: 0/+2D6*
Attacks: Wood Axe 55%, 1D8+2+DB

* When Stephen devours the brain of a victim, he gains some permanent abilities. His increased STR is only temporary. If Stephen spends 5 Magic Points, he gains a quarter of each victim's STR added to his base total for one round only. The 31 reflects points gained from his six current victims. His damage bonus goes up when his STR does. This is a physical transformation: as his STR is boosted, Stephen's muscles writhe and grow alarmingly until he bulges to twice his normal size.

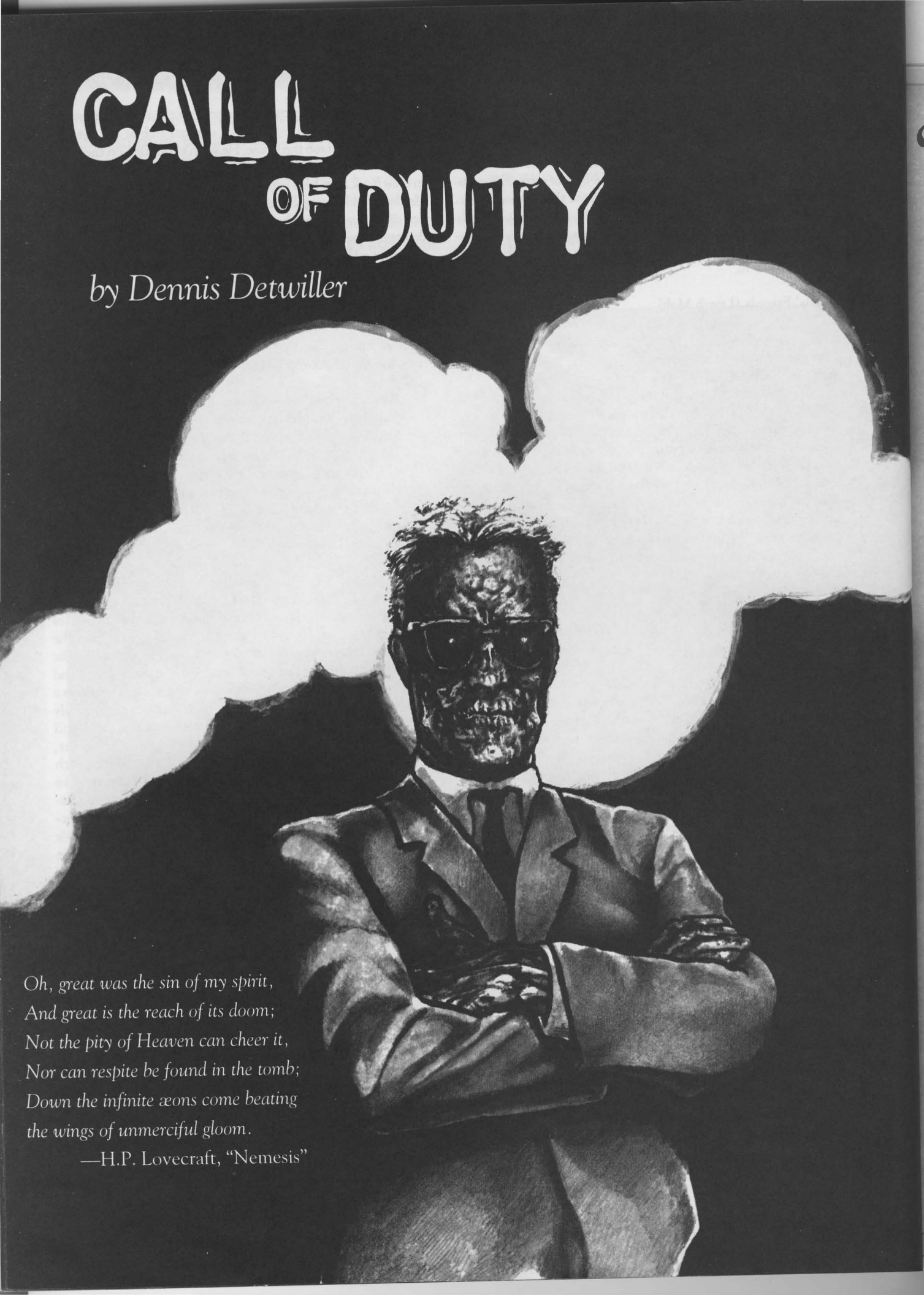
** Stephen's INT is unmeasurable by any human standard, though its alien nature means that Stephen often behaves in a manner which in a normal human would seem odd, or even retarded. However, Stephen can also call upon the INT of his victims, one victim at a time, so that he might suddenly develop uncharacteristically human plans and ideas. He can use his victim's skills at the same time: drive a car like Byron Powers, for example, or shoot a rifle like Billy Winters. The Keeper should add whatever skills and skill levels he feels appropriate to the situation. However, Stephen can never maintain this link for long since each personality wants its turn on stage. He might drive like Byron, but if an uneducated novice driver personality decides to take over then Stephen will probably crash spectacularly. This struggle for dominance is represented by a POW vs. POW test: Stephen's effective POW of 18 (his base of 12 plus only 1 POW per victim) versus the subservient personality (all victims apart from Byron being assumed to have 12 POW; Byron has 15). This struggle is represented physically by Stephen's extra faces, chattering maniacally, shifting up and down Stephen's malformed body.

† Stephen gains, on a permanent basis, a quarter of each victim's POW (rounded up) added to his own base total. He can use this to augment his STR as mentioned earlier.

‡ Stephen gains, on a permanent basis, half the Hit Points of each victim, giving him unearthly stamina and resistance to pain. For every 6 HP lost Stephen will also lose a personality: the tiny face will squeal loudly and then fall silent. Personality loss should be determined randomly, though it is suggested that Byron be the last to go.

CALL OF DUTY

by Dennis Detwiller



Oh, great was the sin of my spirit,
And great is the reach of its doom;
Not the pity of Heaven can cheer it,
Nor can respite be found in the tomb;
Down the infinite æons come beating
the wings of unmerciful gloom.

—H.P. Lovecraft, "Nemesis"

"Call of Duty" is a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario set in the fictional city of Durban, Rhode Island, in the year 1925. The investigators play agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation trying to shut down Antonio Marchesi's illegal operations, which include nefarious acts such as bootlegging and the release of Gods from beyond space and time. So! Pull down your fedora, check your badge, load another drum in your Tommy Gun, and get ready to put your sanity to the test—your superiors will never believe this.

Background

Federal authorities believe that Antonio Angelo Marchesi leads a liquor bootlegging ring out of the small town of Durban, Rhode Island. Recent information from an informant in the area, as well as the testimony of several "snitches" elsewhere, has provoked the FBI to try and link Marchesi and the alcohol trafficking, in the hopes of bringing down his organization. His method of liquor import or brewing is unknown. Huge amounts of liquor, however, are known to come and go from Durban.

Marchesi has not been seen since 1918, although he still maintains his official address at a large house in Durban. Several known accomplices of his have been positively identified as common sights on the streets of the town. It is widely assumed that local law enforcement in Durban has long since been supplanted by Marchesi's underlings. In fact, several dozen properties in the town are legally owned by Marchesi. To most in the town he is seen as a generous, if flawed, benefactor.

It is known that Marchesi maintains a small "army" of immigrants, most of which for some strange reason originate from the Orient. Marchesi himself is Italian and (as far as is known) has never been closer to the Orient than Chicago. These immigrants are legal, however, and have been brought to America at great expense to Marchesi for unknown reasons. It is thought that his strange obsession with the occult may have something to do with his fascination for the "mystical" Far East.

Marchesi subscribes to dozens of parapsychological journals, as well as several medical and military medicine magazines, and a strange assortment of lurid "trash titles" featuring pictures of car crashes, murder scenes, and strange deaths. Among his large purchases of the last four years are several extremely valuable antique books (purchased by an agent in New York), covering such disparate subjects as natural history and magical resurrection.

Marchesi's associates are a strange lot. **Chester "Shells" Walsh** is a known criminal, with a record pages long of violent (and often twisted) crimes; even in organized-crime circles he is given a wide berth as he tends to put personal interests before those of his employer. Marchesi seems to enjoy his work however, as Chester has been confirmed by the local informant to have been living in Durban for more than three years. Chester despises his first name, and prefers his moniker "Shells." It is rumored that he once killed a man for calling him by his first name.

Dr. Otto Schmiddt has been living in Durban since 1920. Wanted on several charges of fraud and for numerous debts, he fled to Durban from New York at the invite of Marchesi. Schmiddt was once the managing editor and chief researcher for one of the less sensational parasychological journals, *The Hidden Sciences*—one of the titles Marchesi subscribed to. The journal sold poorly, and soon Schmiddt found himself in debt. A German national, he has only recently been granted citizenship, and the charges against his name have been cleared by Marchesi's attorneys in New York. It is unknown what he has done in exchange or what role he plays in Marchesi's organization.

Stephiana Aldercott, a young and beautiful lady, is Marchesi's apparent consort. She is known to have been associated with Dr. Schmiddt in some occult circles. Her specialty is cartomancy, though she also practices several other types of divination. Aldercott has been living in Durban since 1919, and shares the same address as Marchesi. The true nature of their relationship remains unknown.

The town of Durban is assumed to be an extension of Marchesi's organization, and no one there is to be trusted. Definitive evidence linking Marchesi (or at least one of his compatriots) to the illegal liquor is necessary before any further moves can be made by the FBI. Also, any insights into the method of smuggling or brewing used to get the huge amounts of liquor in and out of Durban is a high priority.

The Truth

Antonio Marchesi is a blind servant of Yog-Sothoth, the All-In-One, and a member of a cult dedicated to Yog-Sothoth's release. The illegal import and sale of liquor is used to further the will of his God, in the hopes of someday releasing it from its prison in Space/Time.

Marchesi has remained in hiding since 1918. This is due to his strange affliction, caused by over-exposure to his lord Yog-Sothoth during communion. Marchesi's skin can no longer stand exposure to sunlight, and bright light of any sort disturbs him. He lives in a rambling mansion, leaving only on moonless nights for rituals on the marsh.

Marchesi's seamless smuggling of alcohol is made possible by the Make Gate Boxes spell, imparted to him by Yog-Sothoth. This spell connects two points in space/time, so that any matter travelling through one will instantaneously appear at another no matter the distance. With these boxes, Marchesi imports huge amounts of alcohol from Canada, distilled there by the remains of a large inbred family who also worship Yog-Sothoth.

Marchesi is the leader of this worldwide cult of madmen, chosen by the will of the God Yog-Sothoth itself. As such, he has access to thousands of followers worldwide who will do anything to complete the goal of the cult—the freeing of their god.

To cast the spell to release Yog-Sothoth requires three hundred followers, all knowledgeable of the spell, and a ghastly tower constructed partially from mortar and stone and partially from human corpses killed in ritual sacrifice.

To this end, Marchesi has been moving members of the Chinese Yog-Sothoth cult (they know the god as Ne-Pang, the All-Father) to Durban. The Chinese cult of Ne-Pang is the only cult in the world to maintain the spells of release, found in a Chinese manuscript known only as *The Great Book* or *The Key*. No other copies of the spell are known to exist.

The learning of this spell requires years of constant study and discipline. Marchesi received copies of the spells from his Chinese allies in 1919 and has only recently mastered them. Most western members of the cult have not had access to the spells. The Ne-Pang cult, however, sees the learning of the spell as a rite of passage, and so all their members study it for years before being accepted into its highest orders.

To perform the ritual properly, every member of the congregation must know the spell in its entirety, so Marchesi has spared no expense in moving an entire community from China to Durban. The Chinese often act as servants and guards for Marchesi's dangerous operations. Marchesi now has enough knowledgable cultists on hand to cast the spell, and he is almost ready to make it happen. One thing remains before the spell can be attempted, however: the stone tower must be finished. The tower, when complete, will be a hideous thirty-foot-tall obelisk of poured concrete and rotting bodies. At carefully measured intervals, bodies have been embedded in the stone with only their heads and hands exposed. These victims are often left alive in the obelisk for days before they are ritualistically scarred and then sacrificed. This obelisk gathers the power from the sacrificial victims to help in the summoning of Yog-Sothoth. Only two more bodies are required for it to be completed. The selection of victims is a tedious and time-consuming process, as the chosen one must be of high POW or Luck.

Dr. Otto Schmiddt and Chester Walsh, neither of whom knew anything of Yog-Sothoth when first employed by Marchesi, have slowly been inducted into the cult. The power granted by their new lord has been more than enough to win their loyalty. They are the captains of Marchesi's cult, and hold a great deal of power in Durban.

The strangest member of Marchesi's organization is Stephiana Aldercott. She was summoned magically in 1919 by Marchesi, utilizing a spell given to him by his lord Yog-Sothoth. She is an Avatar of Nyarlathotep, and as such, serves the will of Yog-Sothoth. Her beauty and calm demeanor hide her true power. She has provided Marchesi with contacts in the cult of Yog-Sothoth, spells and a network of criminals and buyers. It is unknown how she comes by this information. No one else in the cult knows of her strange past.

Marchesi hopes to complete the spell to release his lord before June 15, 1925. The scenario begins on May 27, as such, the investigators have twenty days to discover and disrupt his operations.

Getting Started

Investigators for this scenario must be either police or federal agents. Most leads and plot threads are through either of these two sources. Agents of the FBI in the Treasury/Bootlegging task-force are highly recommended.

Each agent should possibly have some type of specialty in addition to basic law enforcement skills (*i.e.*, Surveillance, Sharpshooting, Cryptography). This lends itself to individuality and prevents homogenization.

Notes on Law Enforcement

The Volstead Act of 1920 prohibited the production or sale of liquor in the United States. For the

NEW SPELLS

SUMMON FAMILIAR: This spell must be cast on the night of the new moon. The spell caster must be a true and loyal believer in one of the Outer Gods, or Nyarlathotep himself, or the caster is placing himself in mortal danger.

In an isolated place, all the names of Nyarlathotep must be recited (once the first four are said, the recitation becomes automatic); this takes about an hour. 4 POW points are then expended (either from the caster or a bound victim with a POW over 14) and 2/1D6+1 SAN is lost. If the victim is insufficient to power the spell (*i.e.*, POW under 14), the spell fails and may not be cast again that night.

The familiar will appear in the form of someone the caster has known who has died, or as an idealization of the caster's desires. This familiar will serve the caster until death.

The familiar (an avatar of Nyarlathotep—not actually one of Nyarlathotep's many forms) need not sleep, eat, or perform any life functions including breathing or excretion; however it can be slain by the usual physical means. The familiar's senses, intelligence, and magical power are far more advanced than the average human (see Stephiana Aldercott for average statistics of a familiar).

If its human guise is killed, the familiar reverts to its true form, a monstrous giant tentacled nightmare (which costs 1D10/1D100 SAN to view), and unless assaulted further, vanishes.

The familiar will have knowledge of secret and hidden events which have to do with the Outer God that the caster worships and Nyarlathotep. It will provide this information to further the will of that God.

If the caster is not a true believer, the monstrous form of Nyarlathotep appears and consumes the caster. This drawback is not mentioned in the text of the spell.

FREE NE-PANG FROM HIS CELESTIAL PRISON: An ancient spell. To perform the ritual contained within first requires that an area be consecrated to Ne-Pang (Yog-Sothoth). This requires a thirty-foot-tall obelisk. During the construction of the obelisk, a sacrificial victim must be embedded in the concrete or mortar, tortured while still alive, and then killed. The victims' POW is then released into the obelisk. This process must be repeated until the obelisk contains 450 POW.

Once the obelisk is constructed, three hundred believers who know the spell must recite it at night. Upon completion, the entire congregation loses 3 Magic Points each. Yog-Sothoth appears and after consuming 1D100x2 of its followers, disappears. It costs 1D10/1D100 SAN to see Yog-Sothoth.

This spell does not release Yog-Sothoth from his "prison" in space/time as it promises. However, it does allow Yog-Sothoth to manifest on Earth whenever it pleases for short periods without being called, and the effects of the Dismiss Yog-Sothoth spell are rendered permanently useless on Earth.

It is a difficult spell to understand and often takes years to fully comprehend. To learn it once studied, one must make a successful Idea roll and a Cthulhu Mythos roll.

CREATE PERPETUAL MOTION MACHINE: This "spell" is actually a simple hypergeometrical formula well known to the Mi-Go. However, being difficult for the human mind to comprehend, it is a difficult spell to complete.

First a Mathematics skill roll must be made, then an Idea roll. If both are successful (or either is a critical success), a POWx5 roll is made. If successful, the caster loses 10 Magic Points and 1 SAN, rendering the instructions of the spell extremely clear. Lastly, a Physics roll is made. The amount by which it exceeds 01 and still succeeds is the amount of days the machine takes to construct.

Example: The investigator rolls a 10 on a Physics skill of 51%, succeeding. A roll of 10 exceeds a 01 by 9, so the machine takes 9 days to construct.

Once activated, the small wagon-wheel-like machine will not cease movement (rotating) unless shut down with a specific sequence of movements described in the spell. Anyone observing the object at length loses 0/1 SAN. Anyone with a Physics or Mathematics skill over 35% loses 1/1D6 SAN.

The machine has no motors or engines of any sort, and is moved by the incomprehensible relationships of hypergeometry.

It is functionally useless, however, as the device may not be connected to any other device, or it will cease to operate as the hypergeometrics it relies upon will be invalidated.

THE BAD GUYS

Antonio Angelo Marchesi
Gangster and Cult Leader, age 66
Race: Caucasian

STR	10	CON	11	SIZ	12	INT	14
POW	27*	DEX	11	EDU	16	HP	12

* Marchesi's POW has been increased through devotion and study of Yog-Sothoth.

Damage Bonus: +0
Occupation: Real Estate Developer (supposedly)
Skills: Accounting 39%, Archaeology 41%, Astrology 55%, Astronomy 42%, Cartography 44%, Chemistry 57%, Cthulhu Mythos 43%, Dodge 22%, History 59%, Intimidate 13%, Physics 58%, Theology 36%
Languages: Classical Chinese 54%, Mandarin Chinese 51%, English 88%, Italian 80%, Latin 76%
Attacks:
Touch 43%, drain 1D4-2 CON corruption damage
Fist of Yog-Sothoth 67%, 1D6 STR per MP spent (this is a spell he often attacks with)
Spells: Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, Summon Familiar (see p. 79), Summon/Bind Servitor, Free Yog-Sothoth (see p. 79), Call Yog-Sothoth, Create Gate, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Make Gate-Boxes, Resurrection.
Magic Items: Marchesi always wears a silver pendant, which can "drink" Magic Points from a target. When the pendant is placed on the chest of a restrained victim, the jewel set within will drain all Magic Points from the victim, rendering him unconscious. The pendant can hold a reservoir of Magic Points equal to the wearer's current POW, which are available for the wearer's use. If the pendant is removed from the wearer, all stored Magic Points are lost. Marchesi almost always keeps the reservoir full.
Note: Marchesi takes 1D6 points of damage each round that he is exposed to sunlight.
SAN Loss: It costs 1D4 SAN to view Marchesi in his cancerous, unclothed form.
Physical Description: Thin of build, Antonio Marchesi stands 5'4" and weighs 108 lbs. Due to prolonged contact with Yog-Sothoth, he has mutated into a horrible, cancerous cadaver of a human being. He rarely leaves the Manchester house and if he does, he covers all of his skin and wears sunglasses even in the dead of night. Due to the changes in his senses, Marchesi can see in absolute darkness and on a POWx2 roll can *smell* a living target within 300' even if the target is completely hidden from sight.
History: Research into Marchesi's past reveals very little until he came to America in 1912. Before that, the only record of his existence is a seminary record from Archevo Sicily of his study there which is nearly impossible to come by (a critical Library Use success would do it). He was arrested several times for involvement with organized crime in Boston during the years of the Great War (once for accomplice to murder, twice for theft), but never convicted. He was believed dead for a time until it was discovered by federal authorities that he was lying low in Durban.

Chester "Shells" Walsh
Hair-Trigger Killer, age 29
Race: Caucasian

STR	16	CON	14	SIZ	14	INT	11
POW	14	DEX	11	EDU	6	HP	14

Damage Bonus: +1D4
Occupation: Gangster, Cultist
Skills: Astronomy 15%, Climb 52%, Cthulhu Mythos 9%, Dodge 61%, Drive Automobile 54%, Hide 31%, English 35%, Land Navigation 39%, Rope 28%, Sneak 58%
Languages: Mandarin Chinese 15%, English 48%
Attacks:
Fist/Punch 61%, 1D3+1D4
Handgun 52%, 1D10 (Model P08 Luger, kept in shoulder holster)
Shotgun 44%, 2D6 (Remington 17A, sawed off and concealed on sling under jacket. 5 rounds.)
Submachinegun 66%, 1D10+2 (Thompson Submachinegun)
Note: Without his glasses, all of Walsh's physical skills are at -30%.
Physical Description: Tall, muscular, and wild-eyed, Walsh is 6'2" and weighs 183 lbs. His coat bulges, barely containing concealable weapons of all sorts; at night in the safety of the town, he even carries his Thompson everywhere in plain sight. He is never without his battered golf cap and glasses.
History: Chester Walsh left the Massachusetts state reformatory in 1917 to join the Marines. He jumped ship in Shanghai in 1917 and disappeared for two years. Returning to Boston in 1920, he fell in with several gangs. Through Stephiana Aldercott he was introduced to Marchesi, and was bent to the will of Yog-Sothoth.

He is now a fervid servant of Yog-Sothoth and as such would sacrifice himself for his lord. Chester dislikes his first name and has in the past killed quite a

few people over the matter. He habitually carries a Thompson submachinegun and is never far from it.

Stephiana Aldercott
Avatar of Nyarlathotep, age 19 (apparently)
Race: Caucasian
Human Form

STR	10	CON	10	SIZ	11	INT	30
POW	50	DEX	12	EDU	-	HP	11

Monstrous Form

STR	50	CON	20	SIZ	60	INT	30
POW	50	DEX	16	EDU	-	HP	40

Damage Bonus: -1D4
Occupation: Advisor to Antonio Marchesi
Skills: Seduce 55%, Speak Human Language 67%, Look Sincere 98%
Languages: All
Attacks (Monstrous Form only):
Tentacle 51%, 1D6+6D6+Leech (Drains 1D6 POW per round. When target reaches 0 POW, the body turns to dust. A STR vs. STR roll is needed to get free.)
Spells: Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, Call Nyarlathotep, Summon Familiar
Note: If Stephiana Aldercott is reduced to 0 HPs, she automatically reverts to Monstrous Form.
SAN Loss: Viewing the Monstrous Form costs 1D10/1D100 SAN
Physical Description: Thin and darkly beautiful, Stephiana Aldercott is 6'1" and weighs 141 lbs. She often plays jokes that suit her odd sense of humor.
History: Stephiana Aldercott does not really exist. Although she has travelled in and out of many countries (Egypt, Britain, and the United States, among others), none of those countries contain any record of her citizenship.

Dr. Otto Schmiddt
Mad Parapsychologist, age 49
Race: Caucasian

STR	10	CON	13	SIZ	16	INT	16
POW	11	DEX	12	EDU	23	HP	14

Damage Bonus: +1D3
Occupation: Advisor to Antonio Marchesi
Skills: Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 31%, Cryptography 61%, Cthulhu Mythos 39%, Electrical Systems 37%, Electrical Repair 35%, Forgery 55%, History 49%, Library Use 74%, Occult 69%
Languages: Classical Chinese 63%, Mandarin Chinese 59%, English 50%, French 75%, German 100%, Latin 98%, Sanskrit 54%, Spanish 67%
Attacks:
Handgun 34%, 1D10 (Model P08 Luger, kept in shoulder holster. 8 rounds.)
Spells: Black Binding, Call/Dismiss Nyarlathotep, Call Yog-Sothoth, Dread Curse, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Grasp of Cthulhu, Shrivelling,Wither Limb, Wrack
Physical Description: Schmiddt is large (6'3"), but the muscle of his youth has changed to fat (221 lbs.). He is a plain-looking bald man with wire-frame reading glasses. He speaks clear English with a distinct German accent.
History: Dr. Otto Schmiddt was a world-reknowned parapsychologist, publishing articles in numerous journals and later starting his own, *The Hidden Sciences*, which folded in 1920. He met Stephiana Aldercott in 1919 and through her entered the service of Marchesi and Yog-Sothoth.

first time, federal law enforcement was put to the test on a large scale.

The Volstead Act was the springboard needed for organized crime to become truly huge. Being a federal act of the U.S. government, the act was federally enforced when bootlegging became a national problem. Agents of the Treasury department and the FBI were sent out to help organize police forces around the United States to deal with the problem.

The official powers of federal agents in 1925 are sketchy at best, and private citizens can be readily convinced that most any action short of murder is acceptable. However, jurisdiction is still a touchy matter and federal agents may encounter prejudice from local law enforcement. As such, it was standard for an advisor from local law enforcement to be assigned to the federal investigation to smooth things over.

The Keeper and players will need to put some thought into setting up this aspect of the scenario. What roles will the players take, and what connection—if any—will they have with local law enforcement?

The Assignment

The investigators are assigned the task of taking down Marchesi and his operation. Solid proof linking Marchesi to the illegal liquor or to any federal crime must be discovered before any arrests can be made.

The FBI wants a conviction on Marchesi or his men, and the more damaging the evidence is, the better. Any records of illegal transactions, such as are found in accounting books, cyphers, or doctored ledgers, are of the highest priority for recovery.

The investigators are to remain undercover in Durban for fear that Marchesi might skip town, and are not to reveal their identity to anyone, under any circumstance. The details of their cover story are left up to the agents to create. Local law enforcement in Durban is assumed to be under Marchesi's influence and should not be consulted or relied upon.

The investigators have the authority to carry deadly weapons, and are given free access of the Bureau's weapons locker. A federal car (Model T) is also assigned.

Durban, Rhode Island

Durban was settled late in the state's history, around 1855, due to the advent of a sluiceway and drainage system emplaced in Goat's Foot Marsh. It grew from the center of two crossroads and soon became a thriving town known for its fish and coal. Occasionally, the drainage system overflows and the town floods.

Durban is named for town founder Andrew Durban, a man of Dutch descent and a fisherman by trade. It was for many years quite an ordinary run-down town, populated by reasonably happy people wary of outsiders and content with their lives.

When Antonio Marchesi arrived in 1918, things began to change. Many out-of-town thugs arrived, along with dozens of foreigners. Under the direction of Marchesi, his "soldiers" began to rough up the townfolk and buy out those in authority. By 1925, Marchesi's operation has reached its height—at this time the entire town, except for a few individuals, is totally under his thumb. Strange shipments in unmarked boats arrive at the docks at odd hours, men in dark suits patrol the streets, and shacks full of foreigners dot the wastes of Goat's Foot Marsh. Police cars remain inert and the sheriff stays home all day.

Marchesi remains in his mansion, the Manchester House, nearly all the time now. He is never seen by townsfolk.

Geography & Commerce

The town of Durban is little more than forty buildings cut down the middle by a crossroads on a small peninsula in the Narragansett Bay. A single modern paved road runs towards Kingston, some ten miles northwest, but it is the only large road in the area. Durban sits on a high point just north of the Goat's Foot Marsh, which borders Conshen Bay.

In the past, the mining of coal and peat were a large industry in Durban, but fishing has replaced them both. The well-maintained bay is known to be rich in lobster and crab when in season and just off the coast there are large schools of fish including bass, flounder and snapper. Today, five large fishing companies make their home in Durban, with more than thirty large fishing boats between them. Seafood is the second largest—and the only legal—Durban export.

The Cooper Hotel

The Cooper Hotel has fifty rooms and is easily the largest building in Durban. Built in 1899 by Emmet Cooper, the hotel has enjoyed an active history. Most of the occupants from its heyday were business representatives for coal-mining firms, fishing conglomerates, and the like.

Today, although mostly empty, it enjoys a useful existence under its current owner, Antonio Marchesi. It is used mostly as a safehouse for Marchesi's men, and often the more important members of the cult of Ne-Pang stay there. In addition, large kegs of whiskey are stored in the basement, and important papers and valuables are kept in the large office safe. Only Chester Walsh, Dr. Schmiddt, and Marchesi know the combination to the safe.

The hotel's clerk and bellhop is Randolph Aaron (age 23) who is in the employ of hotel manager Chester Walsh. If researched or questioned, it will be discovered that the contract Aaron works under holds him responsible for anything found on the premises, therefore the connection between Marchesi and any illegalities found at the hotel are tenuous at best.

Although he's a local boy, Aaron is despised by the townfolk —nobody likes a snitch. Anything said in his presence is certain to end up with Marchesi. Aaron is known to monitor telephone calls through the switchboard downstairs (a halved Listen roll will detect breathing on the line). Randy knows all about the booze and related illegal activities, but he does not know anything about the Mythos. He believes that Marchesi has somehow constructed a tunnel from the shacks on Goat's Foot Marsh to the Manchester house, where the illegal liquor is moved back and forth.

Chester Walsh resides in the hotel, in room 199. His room is unremarkable except for its cleanliness, which is odd for a disheveled man like Chester. His obsession with cleanliness was ingrained in him in prison, and has stayed with him to this day.

Dr. Schmiddt makes his home in the back of the hotel, where one of the storage rooms has been converted to a sparse bedroom with no personal items of any sort. Dr. Schmiddt chose this location due to its proximity to the Hotel Office, so he may work uninterrupted at odd hours.

The Five and Dime

This general store is located across the street from the Cooper Hotel. Knicknacks and sundry goods of all sorts can be bought here, and the store even maintains a Sears special order catalog for its more wealthy customers. It is also the only place in town to sell gasoline, as the towns' station closed in 1921.

The store's owner is Louise Warshburn (age 31), the town's most prolific (and creative) gossip. She keeps tight tabs on all occurrences in town, and can often be found at the Quality Café trading secrets with Sally Cooper. She has extensive knowledge of the schedule of the trucks coming in and out of Durban, where they go, when, and so on. Unfortunately, she will not reveal any of this information unless threatened. Chester Walsh once heard her talking about Marchesi, and the next day she found her dog Misty impaled on a fencepost in her front yard. Her compulsion to snoop was not overcome, but she is much more quiet about it and confines her gossiping to legal activities except with the aforementioned Sally Cooper.

THE BOOKS IN THE HOTEL SAFE

Most of the valuable occult tomes owned by Marchesi are kept here in the safe, because working copies have been made by Dr. Schmiddt. Occasionally, the originals are referred to for clarification. Most of these books will be of little use to the investigators unless they read Classical Chinese.

Free Ne-Pang from his Celestial Prison

"There are others, perfect and great, beyond this gulf of life who watch the affairs of men, and like a tiger, laugh..."

Langauge: Classical Chinese; **Mythos Gain:** +3; **SAN Loss:** -1/-1D4; **Spell Multiplier:** x2; **Study Time:** 4 weeks; **Spells:** Free Yog-Sothoth (see p. 79)

This is a small rope-bound cloth book containing the titular spell, given to Marchesi by the Order of Ne-Pang in 1919. It has obviously been made very recently. The writing is small and dense, and is interspersed with charts and hand-drawn pictures of Yog-Sothoth and the summoning spell ritual, including pictures of the obelisk necessary for the spell's completion. Even if read by a highly skilled student of Classical Chinese, the bizarre insights into time and space require years to absorb. To be able to cast this spell, one must make a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll.

Das Buch der vielen Läufe (The Book of Many Ways)

"11.3.22: Once again in the night, he has come to me in my dream of a perfect place, a great unity where the entirety of existence is but one endless plain. Unbroken by mountain or river or house, seamless and endless, peace, all-in-one."

Langauge: German; **Mythos Gain:** +7; **SAN Loss:** -1D4/-1D6; **Spell Multiplier:** x2; **Study Time:** 15 hours; **Spells:** Call of Yog-Sothoth, Create Gate, Fist of Yog-Sothoth

A plain, penny notebook with tiny, laborious writing throughout, it is the sole diary of Dr. Schmiddt and catalogues his descent into madness. The diary documents the cult's plans, the details of the summoning spell, Marchesi's condition, and Schmiddt's increased understanding of the Free Yog-Sothoth spell. Schmiddt updates it weekly, and can often be seen writing in it in the Hotel lounge. On the inside front cover is the combination to the safe "10L-15R-22L".

The Scrolls of Manash-Ye

"Across the wastes...(it seems)...there is nothing to contain it. To move across the realms of thought...[section missing]...not difficult to see. The order despises cities and will, given respite,...[section missing]...the spells of release anywhere. Anytime."

Langauge: Classical Chinese; **Mythos Gain:** +4; **SAN Loss:** -1D3/-1D6; **Spell Multiplier:** x3; **Study Time:** 4 weeks; **Spells:** The Blood of the Dead (Black Binding), The Alignment of Eye and Hand (Bless Blade), Waxform (Body Warping of Gorgoroth), The Disordered Path (Cloud Memory), The River (Create Bad-Corpse Dust), Celestial Shield (Create Barrier of Naach-Tith), Door to the

Several kids staff the store including Emma Clifton (age 16), the daughter of the Sheriff. Walsh, Dr. Schmiddt, and Stephiana Aldercott are often to be found shopping at the Five and Dime, although they never seem to pay for anything.

The International Telegraph Company

This small shop is run by the Elain family—more specifically, by Tommy Elain (age 20). Earlier this year Tommy's father took ill, and is now bed-ridden. The children of the Elain family have taken over running the shop. Mindy (16), Luke (12), and Jimmy (11) can often be seen sorting telegrams or even running the desk if Tommy is busy.

In the past, Tommy has seen several suspicious telegrams to and from Walsh, Aldercott, and Dr. Schmiddt, but has no wish to go digging up trouble. Marchesi's crew initially feared that Tommy would attempt to go to the authorities, but he kept his mouth shut and is now ignored.

Under no circumstances will Tommy reveal the contents of any of the telegrams for fear of reprisals against his family.

Edge of the World (Create Limbo Gate), Shun Ne-Pang (Dismiss Yog-Sothoth), The Eye of Kam-Es (Find Gate), The Way of the Ground (Gray Binding), Tiger's Curse (Wither Limb), The Sign (Wrack)

A collection of twenty-two brittle papyrus scrolls contained in a bamboo case, *The Scrolls of Manash-Ye* are obviously very ancient. A DEXx5 roll is required for every day the scrolls are read; if failed, the ancient papyrus of that scroll crumbles.

The scrolls tell the story of Manash-Ye, a traveller found by the monks of an ancient monestary. He had been terribly wounded by a "dragon" and was near death when discovered. Although dying, he performed great feats of magic for the monks to convince them of his story.

The mysterious traveller claimed he was a learned wizard from a realm called Leng, and was pursuing a group who sought to free an evil dragon from a celestial temple so it could consume the Earth and the Sun. When Manash-Ye died from his injuries, the monks swore an oath to find and destroy the group he had opposed. This set of scrolls contains many of Manash-Ye's most powerful spells, dictated to the monks before his death.

Found in an abandoned cave in Tibet in 1918, it was purchased by Marchesi's agent through auction in New York. Dr. Schmiddt is still in the process of translating these scrolls, and can often be found working on his version (listed next) in the office of the Cooper Hotel.

The Scrolls of Manash-Ye (translation)

"Of his demeanor and force of will, I cannot say. He surely survived more than any mortal man..."

Langauge: English; **Mythos Gain:** +3; **SAN Loss:** -1D2/-1D4; **Spell Multiplier:** x2; **Study Time:** 2 days; **Spells:** The Blood of the Dead (Black Binding), The Alignment of Eye and Hand (Bless Blade), The Disordered Path (Cloud Memory), The River (Create Bad-Corpse Dust), Shun Ne-Pang (Dismiss Yog-Sothoth), The Eye of Kam-Es (Find Gate), The Way of the Ground (Gray Binding), Tiger's Curse (Wither Limb), The Sign (Wrack)

This is a partial translation of the scrolls written by Schmiddt in a penny notebook. It contains English translations for most of the spells, and the story of Manash-Ye up to the point where he is discovered by the monks. It is obvious the translator was more interested in the spells than the narrative.

Marvels of Science

"The motion of the outer rim of the machine can be said to act perpetually, while the inward spokes, at the center point, seem not to move at all."

Langauge: English; **Mythos Gain:** +3; **SAN Loss:** -1D2/-1D4; **Spell Multiplier:** x2; **Study Time:** 2 days; **Spells:** Create Perpetual Motion Machine (see p. 79); **Grants Skill Checks In:** Physics, Mathematics, Geometry

This leatherbound pamphlet was written by the scientist Bertrand Morryster in 1790. It outlines some of the more obscure discoveries of his career, most of which—although astounding—failed to attract attention, fame, or wealth. His poor professional reputation stemmed mostly from the fact that he claimed to have gained much of this knowledge from alien creatures who spoke to him in his sleep. Morryster died a pauper in 1799, and his entire estate was sold at auction including his incredible "Perpetual Motion Machine," which has since dissapeared. This block-printed pamphlet was purchased at auction by Marchesi's agent in New York.

The Quality Café

This is a small café on the roadside leading to Kingston. It is owned and run by Samuel Wolrough (age 32), a gruff war veteran who served in France. Wolrough lives in Kingston and prefers not to become involved in Durban matters. He knows little or nothing about Marchesi and he likes it that way. The Café is often packed, as it is a local hangout for the youth of Durban. It serves a select variety of shakes, ice-cream, and malteds, and is just about the only restaurant in town which doesn't serve sea-food.

Sally Cooper (22) (granddaughter of Emmet Cooper, the founder of the Cooper Hotel) works at the Café as a waitress. Off shift, she can often be seen with Chester Walsh, and sometimes sports bruises on her arms and face. Sally knows as much about Marchesi's operation as Louise Warshburn, as the two often trade secrets. They don't share their Marchesi gossip with anyone but each other.

Marconi's Bakery

Vincetto Marconi (age 51) is the last of his family and is the sole employer, employee, accountant, and delivery man for the bakery. A widower for fifteen years, he lost a son to the Great War in 1918 and is looked upon with pity and kindness by the locals.

Marconi's greatest secret is that he is the federal informer responsible for bringing the FBI into Durban. He called the FBI anonymously from Kingston and revealed all he knew about the Marchesi operation (which is not much). As a child in Sicily, Marconi experienced the terrors of organized crime and since he had little to lose, he thought he would do some good.

The Sheriff's Office

This small office is set in the center of town. Obviously in disrepair, it has not seen use since the summer of 1922. The police cruiser, an old Model-T, sits under a tarpaulin on the side of the office with two of its tires missing and the axles up on blocks.

The Sheriff, Garett Clifton (age 32), stays indoors at his home near Goat's Foot Marsh. He has not set foot outside in three years. Garett has long since abandoned the position of sheriff, and cares nothing about Marchesi or his operation. His daughter, Emma, has taken care of him since the death of Mrs. Clifton in 1922.

Although Garett doesn't speak about it, his wife Claudine was killed by the rogue shoggoth on Goat's Foot Marsh in the summer of 1922 (see "The Guardian of the Crick," on the next page). The shock of seeing this has driven Garett over the edge. He sits alone at home drinking whiskey and listens to the radio. Most of the town believes that Claudine was killed in a car wreck, caused by Garett's drinking.

The Old Gas Station

This station was abandoned in 1921 after the owner, Louis Stratner, turned up dead. His body was discovered by Samuel Wolrough on his way home to Kingston late one night. Stratner had been torn limb from limb, and many portions of his body had been spread about the garage. Crushed and splintered bones lay in heaps, separated from bags of muscle in careful piles. His head was never found. It is widely believed that Marchesi was responsible for the murder of Stratner, who was once a police officer in Boston.

In fact, Stratner was killed by the shoggoth which roams Goat's Foot Marsh (see "The Guardian of the Crick," p. 86), which now makes its home at the station in an empty underground gasoline tank. Marchesi had nothing to do with his death.

It is rumored in town that the gas station and the adjacent area near the Marsh are haunted by the ghost of Louis Stratner. This comes from the shoggoth's natural propensity for mimicry, and its long memory. Like a parrot, the shoggoth repeats noises it has heard. The death screams of Louis Stratner can often be heard near the gas station, and the area is avoided by the townsfolk.

The Manchester House

Built in 1861 by local coal magnate Andrew Wallace Manchester, this huge mansion was put up for auction in 1901 after the last of the Manchester line had died. It remained empty for seventeen years, at which point it was purchased from the town by Antonio Marchesi. In the intervening years the house was untenanted and uncared-for. It was soon thought to be an impossible sale due to its horrible condition. The house sits on the crest of Potter's Hill, with an oceanside dock to the east and a utility road into Goat's Foot Marsh passing directly in front of it.

Today, although the basic structural damage has been repaired, the house still remains in grave disre-

THE GUARDIAN OF THE CRICK

Jealous of the power Marchesi wielded in the cult of Yog-Sothoth, a high priest of the cult of Ne-Pang, Yste, attempted to kill him during one of the devotional ceremonies on Marsh Island in 1920. To this end he summoned a Shoggoth, which escaped the binding. It went rampant, killing Yste and twenty-two of the Ne-Pang priests. After being struck by Marchesi's magic, it fled into the water.

It has hunted the Goat's Foot Marsh ever since, occasionally killing and eating town members and farm animals. In 1921, drawn by the noise and activity at the gas station, it killed the proprietor (Louis Stratner) and has since made its home there in an underground gasoline tank. It frequents the area around the station and the local swimming hole, Blatt's Crick. The shoggoth perceives this area as personal territory, and will defend it.

In 1922, the shoggoth again killed a human. It charged and toppled the car of Sheriff Garett Clifton as it drove towards town across a utility road through the Marsh. It ate Garett's wife Claudine, and attempted to eat Garett's car. Garett escaped on foot, all but his sanity unscathed.

Over the years Marchesi has somewhat "domesticated" the shoggoth. Unable to bind it to his will, he has taught it (in a Pavlovian method) to leave cars and boats alone. As a reward, twice a week two live goats and a half dozen chickens are left in a pen on the marsh, which the shoggoth feeds on.

Without the necessity of hunting for food, the shoggoth has turned to hunting for amusement. It has deduced that the humans on the marsh can hurt it, while the humans from elsewhere are easy targets.

The shoggoth is a master of mimicry, and can repeat perfectly any sound it perceives at any volume. It often does so for no apparent reason, much like a parrot. Its memory of sounds is perfect, and it will utilize this skill while stalking prey, misleading or frightening its quarry, until they are an easy kill. Note that it doesn't necessarily understand what sounds it is imitating—it's just making human noises (talking, cries, whatever) to draw attention and bring potential victims near.

The Guardian of the Crick
Free-Range Shoggoth

STR	54	CON	33	SIZ	75	INT	7
POW	10	DEX	5	HP	54		

Attacks:

Crush, 100%, 7D6 (STR vs.STR or be sucked apart)
Notes: The Shoggoth will not attack any Boat or Car and will flee from Marchesi on sight.
SAN Loss: 1D6/1D20

pair. The paint, once bright red, has faded to an uneasy and peeling pink.

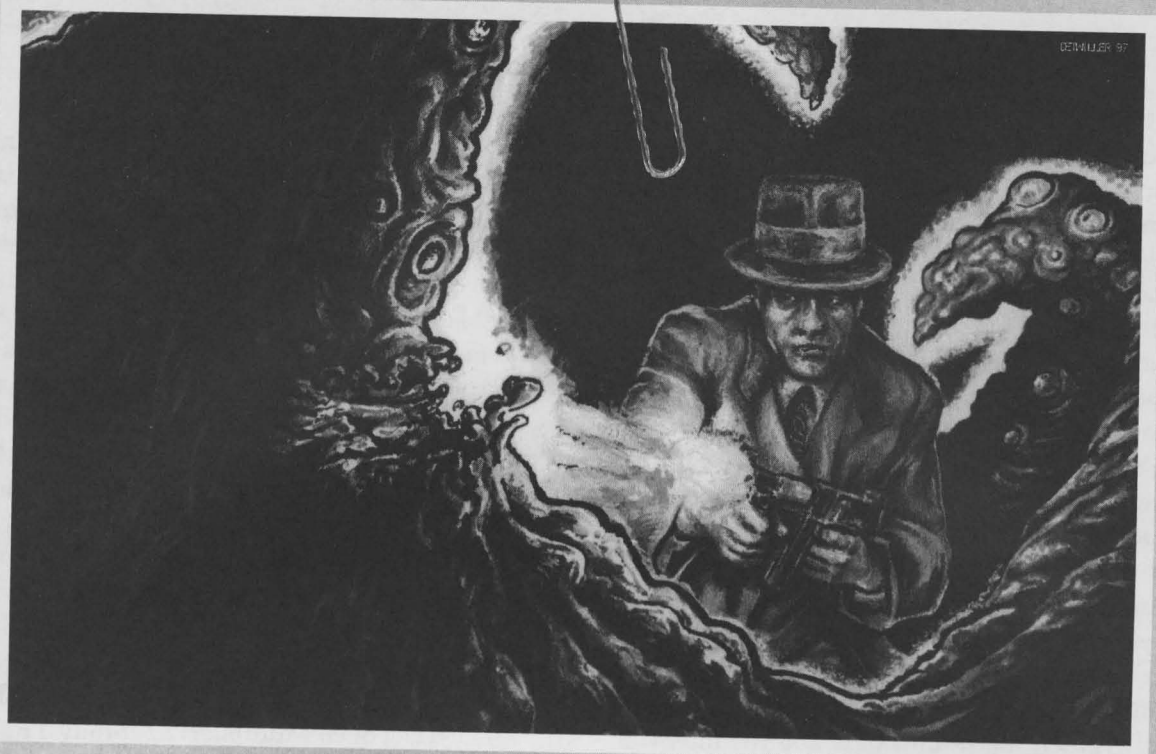
The only person seen coming and going from the house (always by the front door) is Stephiana Aldercott. She can often be seen bringing in parcels of mail, books, and other sundries from the Five and Dime. Only on moonless nights will the hunched figure of Marchesi be seen to leave the house.

All the windows of the house have been boarded up with carefully cut pieces of wood. No one in Durban knows why. In addition, the Manchester family plot in the backyard has been excavated, and no one knows what was done with the graves. (Marchesi used the remains as experiments with the Resurrection spell; the imperfect bodies were deemed useless and turned back to essential salts.)

Inside the house, a place never seen by townsfolk, the disrepair soars to a new level. Black as pitch at all times (a series of heavy rugs have even been hung in the foyer to prevent light from coming in), the house is a filthy pit smelling of human excrement and rotting meat. Every available space is taken up by moldering stacks of newspapers and parapsychological journals, occasionally broken by old empty shipping crates used as impromptu furniture.

The kitchen is an abbatoir, with chunks of rotting meat left floating in the moldy waters of the sink. Strangely, no flies are present in the house. The new refrigerator is empty, except for several canteens full of sea water. Huge, open sacks of flour line the wall of the kitchen, some ripped open, some half empty (this is Marchesi's sole diet, due to his affliction). In an old bowl on a table, a mush of flour has hardened to rock with a spoon still stuck in it.

Marchesi's study is the entire second floor, and all the interior walls here have been demolished, leaving one huge open space. Hundreds of books line the wall in plain pine bookshelves, many mundane, most



OCCULT BOOKS IN THE HOUSE

Although there are hundreds of titles on Marchesi's book shelves, a dozen are provided as guidelines in case the investigators go through everything.

The Rites of the Green God
Author: Barrister; **Year:** 1901; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-1; **Study Time:** 1 week; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Occult

Ilyak Vonic
Author: Solomon; **Year:** 1889; **Langauge:** English Translation; **SAN Loss:** 0/-2; **Study Time:** 3 weeks; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Occult

Voices of the Dead
Author: Czelur; **Year:** 1905; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-1; **Study Time:** 1 day; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Occult

A Treatise of Magnetism upon Stone
Author: Pitts; **Year:** 1917; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-1; **Study Time:** 3 weeks; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Physics

Mass Vulgatum
Author: Aleatto; **Year:** 1791; **Langauge:** Italian; **SAN Loss:** 0/-2; **Study Time:** 1 week; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Occult

The Secrets of the Sphinx
Author: Morrison; **Year:** 1811; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-1; **Study Time:** 1 day; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Archælogy, Occult

Studies of the North American Mound Builders with special reference to the Dunley Text
Author: Winfield; **Year:** 1922; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-1; **Study Time:** 2 weeks; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Archælogy, Anthropology

Harper Wallace
Author: Wallace; **Year:** 1756; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-1; **Study Time:** 12 days

Strange Disappearances
Author: Loomis; **Year:** 1911; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-1; **Study Time:** 7 hours

The Rite of Mayday
Author: Barrister; **Year:** 1909; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-2; **Study Time:** 1 week; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Occult, Anthropology

Teutonic Practices
Author: Barrister; **Year:** 1906; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-2; **Study Time:** 2 days; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Archæology, Occult

Medical Oddities
Author: Davida; **Year:** 1885; **Langauge:** English; **SAN Loss:** 0/-3; **Study Time:** 2 weeks; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Medicine

MYTHOS BOOKS IN THE HOUSE

These are the two penny notebooks found on the card table in Marchesi's study, both of which are handwritten translations/transcriptions of two Mythos books. Marchesi is currently studying the *Cultus Malfecarum*'s spell list.

A Parlay with the Demon, Belapt

"Although a prisoner, and surrounded by guard, the Demon had granted the man a demeanor of a King, and so all eyes found themselves drawn to him. He motioned not, nor made a sound, instead fixing me with such a gaze as would haunt me forever, I knew then that God was indeed far from this place."

Langauge: English (translated from German); **Mythos Gain:** +6; **SAN Loss:** -1D6/-1D8; **Study Time:** 4 weeks; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Theology

Written by Gustav Theodorous in 1681 as a report to the Holy Father, this document details the interrogation by religious authorities of the demon Belapt. This demon had possessed a man known only as S.A. in the document for over five years, and all methods of expulsion attempted in that time had failed miserably.

Gustav was directed to try to engage the demon in a discussion of theology by his direct superior, in the hopes of "scouting enemy territory" as it were although this was against church doctrine. Theodorous was an experienced exorcist, and had extensive knowledge of the occult; it was thought he would be prepared for their conversations. He was not.

In the document, Belapt discusses the true nature of the universe at length with Gustav, and much of the book is word-for-word dictation. Often Belapt lectures on the "Ones of Old," and names many of them: Kthutu, Nyar-hotep, Nodens, Yugsuthoth, Shub-Niggurath. Several times Belapt points out the blasphemous similarities between Nyar-hotep and the Holy Spirit to infuriate its interrogators.

Many entities of the Cthulhu Mythos are briefly discussed in this document, and their interrelationships and intentions are made clear. To anyone recently introduced to the Mythos, this document is a startling and disturbing insight into the secret history of the world.

This book is written in the careful hand of Marchesi with a fountain pen. Blots and spills dot many pages; certain portions on Yugsuthoth are underlined or otherwise marked.

Cultus Malfecarum (The Sussex Manuscript)

"Movement between the far worlds and the stars they circle requires a sustenance found in the guts of a man, many times over. Once the place of the Token hath been set, and a time hath been set, it must not be missed, or the wrath of the One and that of his servants may doom thee. Being a time of torpor, the Others from Outside gain strength in their repose in this world, waiting for a time again where their kind shall cavort among the stars and lay waste to all who have come since their sleep."

Langauge: English; **Mythos Gain:** +7; **SAN Loss:** -1D3/-1D6; **Spell Multiplier:** x2; **Study Time:** 31 weeks; **Spells (those underlined are flawed and do not work):** Call/Dismiss Azathoth, Dismiss Cthugha, Call/Dismiss Hastur, Call Nyogtha, Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth, Contact Elder Thing, Contact Ghoul, Contact Hound of Tindalos, Contact Nyarlathotep, Contact Sand Dweller, Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, Powder of Ibn Ghazi, Resurrection, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Voorish Sign; **Grants Skill Checks In:** Occult

This English copy of the *Necronomicon* was published in 1597 by the crazed Baron Frederick of Sussex. It is unknown where he came by a copy of the original *Necronomicon* to work from, but this copy deviates from it in the most important portions, the spells. Certain spells were miscopied or distorted, rendering portions of them ineffective or dangerous (the specific effects are left up to the Keeper).

This copy is transcribed in the tiny hand of Dr. Schmiddt in quill pen, with three lines of handwritten text for every ruled line, and almost looks to be printed by machine until examined closely.

not. On an old card table, Marchesi performs his work, studying and translating books in conjunction with Dr. Schmiddt who works in town. Two large penny notebooks sit on the table (described nearby). Marchesi is almost always here working in the dark, except on nights of the rituals on Marsh Island.

The basement is empty except for a stack of building supplies and tools left in a disheveled pile

near one corner. A large bulkhead door opens to the backyard. Unlike all other doors on the house, it is never locked. The door and the bulkhead appear unremarkable, and exiting through the door from the basement to the yard does not pose any problems. However, entry from the outside *in* will activate the magical gate embedded in the bulkhead, transporting any matter sent through the basement door to the Canadian Porteur Camp (see p. 90). Travelling through the gate costs 2 Magic Points (perceived as a draining sensation), and 1 SAN. Anyone observing the transfer takes 0/1 SAN.

The Bootlegging Operation

On every Thursday evening, twenty-two Ford trucks from Kingston rumble up to the Manchester house. It is obvious that the drivers of the trucks are from elsewhere—they are dressed too well for Durban, and all are caucasian.

The trucks stay to the front of the Manchester house while the back swarms with Ne-Pang cultists—most armed with knives in their belts, others with shotguns or Tommy Guns. None of the out-of-town truck drivers are allowed to see the rear of the building, and all are watched by a single Ne-Pang cultist with a Tommy Gun. The drivers' discomfort is obviously visible.

Over the course of about two hours, the cultists hand-load the trucks with small plain wood boxes. Each box contains five bottles of Canadian whiskey. Very rarely a large keg will be loaded. The boxes and kegs are retrieved from the bulkhead in the back of the Manchester house, although no one enters the bulkhead at any time; instead, a pair of hands can be seen emerging from the darkness to hand out the liquor. (This, of course, is one of Marchesi's Canadian allies transporting the contraband through the massive Gate.)

When the loading process is completed, the trucks drive off towards Kingston. If followed, they switch roads and head towards Narragansett Pier, where the boxes are unloaded on a freight ship bound for New York City. The drivers then head north towards Boston. The drivers are all members of the O'Shea criminal organization of Boston, and know next to nothing about Marchesi and his operation; their bosses learned early on that those questions got people killed.

BOOTLEGGING CULTISTS

	STR	DEX	INT	CON	APP	POW	SIZ	EDU	HP	DB
#1	10	11	9	11	8	12	11	7	11	-
#2	12	10	10	14	10	10	14	6	14	+1D4
#3	9	11	12	9	11	11	10	10	10	-
#4	12	11	9	11	6	12	15	3	13	+1D4
#5	10	10	12	8	13	9	10	9	9	-
#6	13	12	10	10	9	9	15	5	13	+1D4
#7	9	11	15	12	16	12	11	12	12	-
#8	10	10	9	9	11	11	9	5	9	-
#9	11	9	11	15	10	10	10	6	13	-
#10	12	10	10	12	8	12	11	5	12	-
#11	18	12	11	10	10	9	9	6	10	+1D4
#12	11	9	10	12	11	11	16	5	14	+1D4

Skills: Dodge (DEXx2)+10%, Hide 35%, Classical Chinese 51%, Mandarin Chinese 55%, English 23%

Attacks:

Punch 65%, 1D4+DB damage

Knife 48%, 1D4+2

#1,3,8,10,12,2,5 Rifle 26%, 2D6 (.30 Lever Action Carbine)

#6 Submachinegun 35%, 1D10+2 (Thompson Sub-Machinegun)

#11,7,4 20g Shotgun 36%, 2D6/1D6/1D3

Spells: Free Yog-Sothoth.

Notes: These men will not hesitate to shoot at anyone approaching the Manchester house. They will gleefully sacrifice themselves to protect Marchesi.

THE CANADIAN CAMP

Through the gate embedded in the bulkhead of the Manchester house is the camp of the Porteur family in Tweedsmuir Provincial, British Columbia, nearly 2,300 miles distant. Although travel through the gate is instantaneous, note that it will be three hours earlier at the Canadian camp than it will be in Durban (owing to time zones). Travelling through the gate costs 2 Magic Points and 1 SAN point; upon discovering that they have teleported to Canada, the investigators lose an additional 0/1D4-2 SAN. (No, not because being in Canada intrinsically causes SAN loss.)

Tweedsmuir Province is an unsettled backwater about two hundred miles north of Vancouver. It is a range of forest and rivers north of the Coast Mountains. Almost completely unsettled except for the occasional trapper or hunter's cabin, it sees very little human activity. Roads other than simple cleared forest paths are nearly non-existent. The closest town to the Porteur camp is Kimsquit, some forty miles distant. Kimsquit is the closest town with facilities to contact the outside world.

The land is rocky and treacherous, and covered almost completely with fir trees and small ferns. Many mountains can be seen on the horizon, the largest snow-covered even in summer. Animals are everywhere: deer, moose, wildcat, hare, and dozens of types of birds. The area of Tweedsmuir remains almost completely untouched by human hands.

Upon exiting the gate into the Canadian camp, the investigators will find themselves standing in a huge cut-down clearing in the woods. The gate in Canada appears as a large standing door-frame, the same size and dimensions of the bulkhead in Durban. It will only activate when entered from the south.

A stack of 515 boxes covered with tarpaulins are arranged neatly about thirty feet from the gate; on Thursdays, there is another stack of 515 right next to the Gate. These are the standard whiskey crates seen shipped out of Durban.

On every day except Thursday the clearing is empty. On Thursday, the young boys of the Porteur clan remain here all day, moving boxes and preparing for the transport.

On the hill opposite the clearing (about a quarter mile away), the Porteur Lodge can be seen—a sprawling house constructed of cut logs. It is feverishly maintained by the owners, and appears in perfect condition. Smoke is almost always pouring from one of its four chimneys.

The History of the Porteur Family

This Porteur hunting lodge was constructed in 1895 by Andrew Porteur, a wealthy Vancouver businessman. It was the fulfillment of his dream to live on untouched land, "roughing it." Porteur purchased the land from the Tsituli Indians for an extremely low

THE PORTEUR BOYS

	STR	DEX	INT	CON	APP	POW	SIZ	EDU	HP	DB
Merrickman	10	12	10	12	11	11	10	9	11	-
Warren	11	9	12	11	11	12	14	10	13	+1D4
Bob	15	11	10	14	9	11	10	10	12	+1D4
Jordan	10	14	12	12	10	11	11	9	12	-
Toren	11	13	12	11	11	13	10	10	11	-

Skills in Common: Art (Folk Music) 95%, Astronomy 23%, Chemistry 49%, Dodge (DEXx2)+10%, English 50%, French 57%, Hide 41%, Listen 37%, Mechanical Repair 27%, Land Navigation 44%, Sneak 41%, Track 32%

Attacks:

Punch 57%, 1D3+DB damage.
Wood Axe 59%, 1D8+2+DB
Hatchet 49%, 1D6+1+DB
Hatchet (Thrown) 58%, 1D6+1+half DB

Spells: Call Arwaneteheo (Call Yog-Sothoth), Smite (Wrack)

Notes: All the Porteurs have 0 SAN.

price. Not only was the price unusual, the sale itself by the Tsituli was unheard-of. The Indians confessed that the land was "Dirty with blood," and was consecrated ground for the "Great Devourer," Arwaneteheo. Porteur considered this superstitious nonsense, and over a period of two years the house was constructed in the endless forest north of the Coast Mountains.

Porteur, his wife Emily, and his sons Foster and Cooper would travel every year first to Kimsquit, then downriver to the lodge where they would stay for the summer. Winters were not spent there, as it was feared that the isolation in the lodge (despite its size) could be maddening.

Andrew and Emily Porteur died in 1903. Their car was struck by a train in Vancouver, killing them and two others. The lodge and the contents of his father's estate were left to Foster, then 22.

Grief-struck by the loss of their parents, Cooper and Foster retreated to the lodge for over two years, including the winters. Little is known of what occurred during that time. Although the outfitter in Kimsquit would see them come and go, often purchasing heavy digging equipment and excavation tools, just what they could be doing up there remained a mystery.

In truth, the dreams had begun the first winter they stayed there, with Foster and then with Cooper. Over the winter, as their minds decayed, the meaning of the dreams became clear. An isolated group of Tsituli in ancient times had attempted to free Arwaneteheo, the Great Devourer, from his prison behind the stars. This group had been destroyed by the surrounding tribes before their spells could be completed. But their tribute remained, buried near the Lodge: an incomplete stone obelisk, built with stone, mud, and bones.

That first spring, Cooper and Foster worked tirelessly digging where the dreams told them, and the obelisk was indeed there. Then they waited. The Indian revealed himself one night at the obelisk, an old and withered man. The last descendant of the worshippers of Arwaneteheo, he told the men that a woman would soon come and reunite the cult to free Arwaneteheo, as he was known by many names in many lands. He taught them the rites of the cult, of Arwaneteheo, and was gone.

They waited as instructed. Cooper took a wife from a small Indian village in 1904 and she joined them in madness that winter. The six children born there, five boys and a girl, were raised with the teachings of Arwaneteho and have known no other life except insanity.

The woman messenger, Stephiana Aldercott, arrived on a summer's day in 1920, telling of her master Antonio Marchesi and the needs of their lord in common, the one behind the stars. The Porteurs never hesitated. The construction of the huge whiskey stills was completed in under three months. After the gate to Rhode Island was completed, weeky shipments of whiskey began to finance the operation in Durban. Now the Porteurs wait for the completion of the new obelisk in Rhode Island, and the release of Arwaneteheo.

The Porteur Lodge

A sprawling twenty-four room three-story lodge, it is perfectly maintained by the family even in the depths of madness. The lodge is constructed completely of cut timber logs, interfitted and insulated by an adobe-type mixture; the roof is a sharp angled wood-shingled snow roof, which prevents accumulation over the winters. The interior floors are polished wood, with plain wood-paneled walls and vaulted cross-beam ceilings.

The Porteurs have recently installed electric lights and a water heater which are run by a small gasoline-powered electric generator. Besides these, the lodge has little else in the way of modern amenities.

The male children of the family share a large room downstairs, which is heated from a central stove. The Porteur brothers, Foster and Cooper, share a large bedroom upstairs which is heated similarly. Cooper's wife is shared by the brothers.

The most disturbing thing about the house is the perfection to which cleanliness is taken. Anyone making a successful Psychology skill roll will realize there is a severely disturbed mind at work in the lodge. *Everything* is symmetrical: hung paintings, rugs, even everyday objects placed on a table are even and square with the edge of the table. Nothing is in disorder. Even the cut wood is stacked in a pattern.

The Whiskey Stills

These huge stainless-steel drums are kept in the barn south of the Porteur Lodge. Usually a single family member keeps a careful eye on the many dials and gauges which measure heat and pressure within the airtight vats.

The processed whiskey is dumped into a third smaller vat which has a small spout. Sometimes family members can be found filling glass bottles with whiskey here. Care-

ful piles of empty glass bottles and empty boxes line one side of the barn, while filled and finished boxes line the opposite side. (These boxes are moved by hand to the gate clearing by the boys of the family every Thursday.) Brewing supplies and chemicals are kept in a small shed on the north side of the barn.

Any gunshot or direct hit to the airtight vats with a cutting tool which does more than 5 HPs will cause an explosion. In addition, any gunshot in the barn which misses its intended target has a 10% chance of striking the vats due to their large size.

If an explosion occurs, the barn will collapse and everyone within 50' will take 2D6 HPs damage, and must make a Luck roll or incur an additional 2D6 HPs damage from shrapnel or falling timber.

The Old Obelisk

A beaten path from the gate clearing leads to the pit of the ancient Tsitsuli obelisk. Anyone who has seen the Marsh Island obelisk will immediately recognize this as an almost exact duplicate, except it did not even come close to completion. The stone was shattered in ancient times, releasing the consecrated POW of the sacrificial victims and causing the land to become tainted and affected by the will of Arwaneteheo.

It was this object which caused the degeneration of the Porteur brothers into madness. Anyone remaining in the area of the lodge for more than a year or just touching the obelisk must make a SAN roll; if failed, that night dreams begin of Arwaneteheo and the consecration of the obelisk. In these dreams, dozens of sacrifices are observed at a cost of -1/1D4 SAN per night of sleep. After more than 6 SAN points are lost, the victim then must make a successful SAN roll or be unable to leave the area, or if taken from the area return there under an intense compulsion. This compulsion will not be obvious to the victim, and all manner of excuses and rationalizations will be provided by his deranged mind to stay or return to the lodge.

The Porteur Family

Cooper Porteur
Canadian Loonie, age 41

STR	14	CON	14	SIZ	10	INT	11
POW	12	DEX	11	EDU	12	HP	12

Damage Bonus: 0
Occupation: Distiller
Skills: Astronomy 41%, Chemistry 51%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Electrical Systems 12%, Electrical Repair 24%, Listen 39%, Locksmith 59%, Mechanical Repair 46%, Land Navigation 51%, Pharmacy 39%, Spot Hidden 34%, Track 33%
Languages: English 60%, French 41%
Attacks:
Fist/Punch 58%, 1D3
Wood Axe 61%, 1D8+2
Spells: Call Arwaneteheo (Call Yog-Sothoth), Smite (Wrack), The Hand of God (Fist of Yog-Sothoth), The Sign (Mindblast)
Note: Cooper will use the Wrack and Mindblast spells if engaged suddenly in combat. He will then attempt to get to his favorite axe.
Physical Description: Cooper—5'3" and 159 lbs.—is an imposing presence despite his height. Completely immaculate from head to toe, he looks much like a shaved gorilla in a fine suit. He often nervously rubs his hands together and he speaks with a lisp. Cooper defers to his older brother Foster in all things, although Cooper is the spokesman. He will do everything in his power to kill anyone discovered on his land, no matter their demeanor, dress, or authority. Those captured alive (when possible) will be fed through the gate to the Ne-Pang cult for the Marsh Island obelisk.

Cooper is a harsh father and often beats his children, enforcing his brother's teachings and cleanliness on them with a little Pavlovian violence to make sure the lessons stick.

Cooper is a talented handyman, and all functions to this capacity at the lodge are tended to by him.

After the trucks leave Durban, the Ne-Pang cultists head off down the utility road to the shacks located on the tip of Goat's Foot Marsh.

Goat's Foot Marsh

This marsh covers about twenty square miles south of Durban. Durban itself was also a marsh, until a sluiceway and drainage ditches were dug. They used gravity to dump water into the ocean to the south and left a patch of dry land that became Durban.

Durban still floods when the sluiceway clogs (usually fall or spring), and the townsfolk are old hands at living on a flood plain. In almost every residence or business a visible water line can be seen stained into the paint or wallpaper, but it never gets very high.

The marsh is a common wetland, inhabited mostly by terns and seagulls who feed on the rampant insect

Foster Porteur
Another Canadian Loonie, age 44
Race: Caucasian

STR	13	CON	15	SIZ	11	INT	13
POW	14	DEX	11	EDU	18	HP	13

Damage Bonus: 0
Occupation: Distiller
Skills: Accounting 41%, Astronomy 49%, Chemistry 38%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Listen 51%, Mechanical Repair 31%, Land Navigation 61%, Pharmacy 45%, Spot Hidden 57%, Track 68%
Languages: English 90%, French 46%
Attacks:
Fist/Punch 61%, 1D3
Wood Axe 77%, 1D8+2
Wood Axe (Thrown) 54%, 1D8+2
Spells: Call Arwaneteheo (Call Yog-Sothoth), Smite (Wrack), The Hand of God (Fist of Yog-Sothoth), The Sign (Mindblast)
Note: Foster will attempt to use Wrack on a target secretly, and pretend that the investigator has become naturally ill. If he can cast the spell from a distance on multiple investigators, he will do so to as many as possible before confronting them.
Physical Description: Foster (5'5" and 151 lbs.) appears almost identical to his brother, but is much more sedate and rarely speaks. If encountered first at the Lodge, he will act surprised to see strangers but will not be hostile. He will invite the Investigators to tea, and then attempt to bury an axe in one's back.

Foster is quite insane and everyone in the house, Cooper included, are terrified of him. At the lodge he is seen as the voice of Arwaneteheo, and his word is law.

Aden Porteur
Prepubescent Canadian Loonie, age 8
Race: Caucasian

STR	9	CON	7	SIZ	8	INT	8
POW	9	DEX	13	EDU	1	HP	7

Damage Bonus: 0
Skills: None
Languages: None
Attacks:
Claw 41%, 1D3
Bite 39%, 1 HP damage
Notes: 50% of the time Aden will behave exactly like a cornered wild animal, attacking anything preventing her escape.
Physical Description: The only Porteur daughter, young Aden was unfortunate enough to touch the Obelisk when she was only 5 years old, and has been completely insane since. She jumps between two mental states: in one she is completely sedate, almost catatonic, while in the other she is a vicious little animal who will attack anything in sight or flee.

She has been starved and extensively beaten and is a pathetic sight to anyone who comes upon her in her catatonic state (0/1 SAN loss).

life that fogs the marsh during the summers. Crabs, clams, and muscles can be found near the shores of the marsh, and before the strange occurrences began, children from the town used to go clam digging there often. Now, no one except Marchesi's men go there.

In the past, the marsh was home to many natural deaths due to drowning, exposure, quick-mud, and worse. Since Durban was founded, thirty-three people have died in the marsh; since Marchesi's arrival, that number has doubled.

Movement in the marsh is halved, and if an investigator runs at full speed he must roll a DEXx5 or take 1D4 points damage from brambles, a twisted ankle in the marshy ground, or a deadfall. For every day spent in the marsh, a Luck roll for each investigator must be made; if the roll is fumbled, that investigator has stepped into a patch of quick-mud.

Quick-mud looks like solid ground—but it's really nothing more than a deep pit of thick mud covered with leaves, grass, moss and branches. Once the victim steps into the quick-mud, he is usually pulled down very quickly—1D4-2 rounds before full immersion. When fully immersed, the investigator must roll vs. CONx10 the first round; if the roll fails, he loses 1D6 points of damage from inhaling the mud. If the roll succeeds, the investigator does not take any damage, but on the next round must roll vs. CONx9 and so on (CONx8 on round 3, CONx7 on round 4...). If the roll reaches CONx1, it remains there for subsequent rolls. Once immersed, the only way a victim can escape is to be pulled out by associates; there is no escape from quick-mud.

The Cult Shacks

This conglomeration of shacks is more of a shanty town on the southern tip of Goat's Foot Marsh. Over three dozen small tin-and-wood shacks have been erected by the Ne-Pang since 1919 to house their increasing population. They now number 327.

TWELVE MORE NE-PANG CULTISTS

	STR	DEX	INT	CON	APP	POW	SIZ	EDU	HP	DB
#1	9	12	10	13	10	10	12	5	13	-
#2	11	9	12	11	11	9	9	7	10	-
#3	18	12	9	10	10	10	12	7	11	+1D4
#4	10	14	12	12	10	11	11	5	12	-
#5	11	11	13	10	12	10	13	7	12	-
#6	13	11	11	15	16	13	10	8	13	-
#7	17	11	11	10	9	11	15	9	13	+1D4
#8	10	10	9	9	11	11	9	5	9	-
#9	11	15	10	12	8	11	13	7	13	-
#10	9	11	17	15	10	12	11	5	13	-
#11	18	12	11	10	10	9	9	6	10	+1D4
#12	11	9	10	12	11	11	16	5	14	+1D4

Skills: Dodge (DEXx2)+10%, Hide 35%, Classical Chinese 51%, Mandarin Chinese 55%, English 23%

Attacks:

Punch 65%, 1D4+DB damage.

Knife 48%, 1D4+2

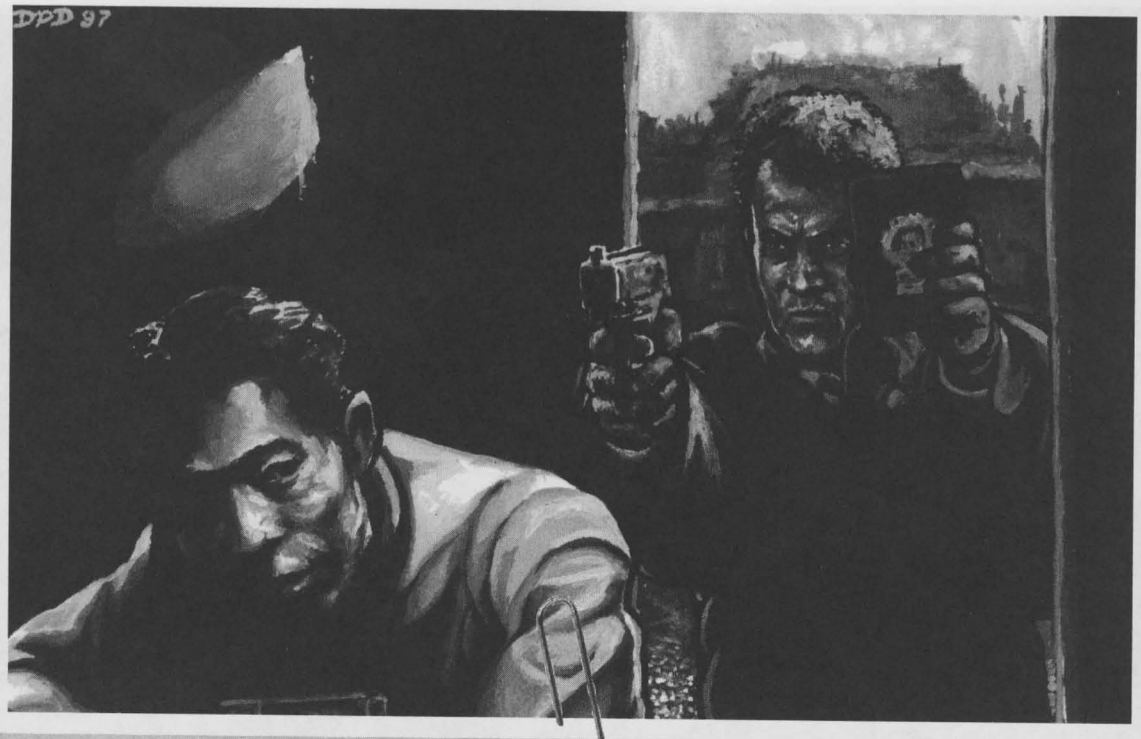
#1,5,6,7,8 Rifle 26%, 2D6 (.30 Lever Action Carbine)

#3, 9,10,11 20g Shotgun 36% (2D6/1D6/1D3)

#4 Submachine Gun 25%, 1D10+2 (Thompson Submachine Gun)

Spells: Free Yog-Sothoth

Notes: Due to the immense amount of Ne-Pang cultists in this scenario, it is recommended that these statistics be recycled throughout game-play.



About three hundred of the Ne-Pang cultists live here in squalor, never leaving except on the moonless ritual nights at Marsh Island. From time to time however, a dozen or so will go into town for supplies, often assisted by Dr. Schmiddt. Most time passed here is done in quiet meditation or minor ritual, and the cultists can often clearly be seen performing prayer of some sort to a large statue set in the center of the camp.

Inside the shacks, filthy war-surplus cots are set on the bare ground. The predominant smells are feces and alcohol, and sometimes opium.

On warm days the cult members will hunt for food—shooting terns, seagulls, or rats. Often they fish in rowboats , and dig for clams and crabs on the beach.

They maintain a large floating dock and twenty row boats. They have two other large steam-driven ships which are used only on nights of the ritual to ferry cultists to Marsh Island.

Weapons are constantly carried by all members, and rifles and submachine guns are openly brandished. In the marshes the cultists fear nothing, and will threaten, harass, and even shoot at investigators without cause.

Strangers carrying weapons on the marsh are subject to a full-fledged attack, with cultists numbering in the hundreds organized to overwhelm the invaders as soon as possible. If the investigators surrender or are taken alive, more fiendish plans are in store for them.

The Statue: This representation of Ne-Pang the All Father (Yog-Sothoth) was shipped from Shanghai at great expense by Marchesi and placed at the center of the camp. It is a six-foot, eight-hundred-pound granite sculpture of carefully interlocking discs and rings, which is fascinating to look at. Anyone looking at the statue who is not a devoted follower of Yog-Sothoth must make an Idea roll. If failed, the victim wakes from a stupor 1D6 hours later (unless startled by a loud noise or similar distraction), realizing that the hours in-between were spent examining all the complex angles and forms of the sculpture. Even if startled out of the stupor, the viewer loses 1/1D4 SAN from this realization.

Marsh Island

Marsh Island is a small island off the coast of Goat's Foot Marsh. About a a mile wide, it has been chosen by the cult for its isolation (entry by boat from the bay is difficult due to sandbars), and its proximity to the Goat's Foot camp. Over the last 3 years, the obelisk to Yog-Sothoth has been constructed here and is now nearly complete. Twenty-eight people have been sacrificed within the Obelisk, and only a total of 30 POW points are required to finish the consecration. Captured investigators will almost certainly end up there.

About a quarter of the island is covered in 6' reeds, but the rest has been cleared to allow all the cultists to attend the Ritual on nights of worship. The obelisk is the most visible object from the water: it stands in a clearing towards the center of the island, and a single path through the reeds leads to it from a simple dock.

At any given time, 12–20 heavily armed cultists guard the tower.

The Obelisk

This hideous structure of decayed and ritualistically tortured bodies embedded in poured concrete costs 2/1D4+1 SAN to view. The obelisk is surrounded by a wood frame of steps that lead up to a flat stand which covers all but the very tip of the obelisk. This is where the next victim will be prepared and entombed. Often, five to ten cultist guards will lounge about on top of the scaffolding, which gives them a complete view of the area.

The wood frame can be easily destroyed; each leg of its base can sustain 15 HPs before splintering. If this occurs, the entire scaffolding will collapse. Anyone within 30' must make a Luck roll; if failed, they sustain 1D6 HPs damage from falling debris.

The obelisk itself is far more difficult to destroy. Any explosive or stone-cutting damage exceeding 100 HPs total will shatter the huge structure into giant shards, releasing the contained POW in a bright flash and blinding everyone in 100' for 1D6+1 rounds. In addition, anyone within 30' must make a Luck roll; if failed, they sustain 1D6+1 HPs damage from concrete and debris.

The Ritual

Every Saturday night, Dr. Schmiddt, Stephiana Aldercott, Chester Walsh, and Marchesi will leave the Manchester house by car and drive to the Ne-Pang shacks on the utility road through Goat's Foot Marsh.

The Ne-Pang camp will be buzzing with activity, and dozens of cultists will be in rowboats preparing to leave for the island. Marchesi and his lieutenants will board one of the steamers and leave for the island, followed by the other steamer, packed full of cult members. This steamer will return twice to pick up more of the Ne-Pang.

By 9:30, Marsh Island will be packed with the Ne-Pang, and Marchesi will lead the ritual to consecrate

the obelisk. While cult members encase the victim in concrete, a small sigil is cut into the forehead of the victim (this costs 1/1D4 SAN to observe if no action towards rescue is taken). Then Marchesi will start the group chant from the "Free Ne-Pang from his Celestial Prison" spell. This chant will last about an hour. When the ritual is complete, most of the Ne-Pang will leave (excepting the standard contingent of guards). Marchesi leaves with his group after praying for a time alone at the base of the obelisk.

The consecration ritual must only occur twice more before the Obelisk is complete, then the full ritual will be cast by Marchesi. This gives the investigators a couple of opportunities to observe the ritual without it being the final one. Marchesi will attempt the final ritual on June 15, 1925, if unhindered by pesky investigators.

The Investigation

"Call of Duty" presents a freeform investigation. It is a milieu, in which a set of NPCs are at work on their varied plans and lives. The investigators enter this milieu and are free to act. It is up to the investigators to formulate their plans, to uncover clues, and to bring things to a conclusion. There are no pre-planned scenes or other narrative requirements. The only regular events are the Saturday night rituals, which may well never be witnessed. The players should constantly feel like they are intruders on someone else's story—which they are.

Given the openness that is intrinsic to this scenario, it is difficult to prepare the Keeper for all of the harebrained schemes that players are likely to come up with in the course of play. Selected notes on what to expect follow, written to the best of the author's ability but certain to fall short of your group's febrile brains.

The Cover Story

The "cover story" under which the investigators enter town is important. Any story which involves the investigators staying in town (especially at the Cooper Hotel) will rouse the suspicions of the cult. Phone calls will be monitored, as will mail. The cult's paranoia of strangers will soon lead to the ransacking of rooms, the mugging of lone investigators, and other harassments. If information is found linking the investigators to law enforcement agencies of any sort, the attacks will become deadly, calculated affairs. Sometimes the cult will construct fake leads to usher the investigators into an ambush where the entire cult will descend on them.

The safest cover story is one that places the investigators out of town, perhaps in Kingston, although this does not automatically rule out an attack by the cult.

The Manchester House

If the house is openly approached during the day, no one can be roused from within with even the strongest blows on the doors or boarded windows. Anyone who is persistent, or approaches in a group (*i.e.*, is not a lone salesman), will be marked for later assault by the cult.

If Stephiana Aldercott is followed from town and confronted before entering the house, she will talk to the investigators at length outside. She will openly talk of Marchesi, claiming that he is bed-ridden with tuberculosis and that she is a hired nurse. She will not allow the investigators to see him or enter the house, using deadly force to prevent their entry if necessary.

The most convenient form of access to the Manchester House is the bulkhead door, which is actually the gate to the Canadian camp. This will cause no end of difficulties for the investigators who go charging into the basement and emerge in British Columbia.

Chester Walsh

This wild-card is the most dangerous element of the cult. His past experience with the law has given him a good eye for spotting G-Men, and he understands that if he is caught it's all over, most likely in the electric chair. If he even suspects that the investigators are Feds or police, he will most likely open up with a Tommy Gun or shotgun, regardless of location, in the hopes of finding favor in the eyes of Marchesi and getting rid of John Law.

Translating Chinese

If the investigators come by some of the Chinese manuscripts in the Cooper Hotel, the closest available translator (unless one of the investigators is fluent) is located at the University of Boston, some 78 miles distant.

Several professors there are fluent in Classical and Mandarin Chinese. They will gladly assist if they are informed that it deals with a federal criminal case.

Townsfolk

Anyone asking questions around town is bound to be noticed by the Cult. In fact, the townsfolk may turn the

investigators in to Marchesi's men, just to be safe. That's the default situation, at least; depending on circumstances and the Keeper's narrative needs, perhaps one of the townsfolk develops a guilty conscience and will agree to testify against Marchesi in exchange for protection.

The townsfolk are a narrative tool. They are primarily here to make it clear how much control Marchesi has, by being uncooperative and paranoid. But if the Keeper needs it, they can help the investigators to some degree, perhaps just by warning of an upcoming attack.

Disrupting the Ritual

The goal of the cult is to bring Yog-Sothoth to Earth and free the God from its space/time prison. There are several methods which are all equally effective in preventing or delaying this:

- Destroy the obelisk on Marsh Island. This is a difficult task due to its proximity to the Goat's Foot camp and numerous guards. However, this will guarantee the cult cannot perform the ritual any time soon.
- Make sure the cult does not complete the consecration—prevent the deaths of the sacrificial victims. Or even better, release one who has already been encased in the obelisk (and is still alive). This will render the obelisk useless in the summoning.
- Kill at least 32 members of the cult. This is a surefire way of stopping the ritual. Without 300 members, the ritual cannot occur.
- Eliminate Marchesi. This can be done with bullets or with subpoenas, but either way, if Marchesi is out of action the rest of his operation will sputter for a few weeks. Eventually, though one of the high priests of the cult will step forward and take the reins.
- The Raid on Durban. If enough evidence can be accumulated, the investigators' superiors will authorize an all-out raid on Marchesi's operation, calling in U.S. Marines to round up the foreigners and using federal agents to storm the Cooper Hotel and the Manchester House.

Sanity Rewards

Kill the shoggoth	+1D6 SAN
Destroy the obelisk	+1D10 SAN
Destroy the gate	+1D3 SAN
Kill Marchesi (once it's clear what he is)	+1D6 SAN
Apprehend Marchesi	+1D6 SAN
Convict Marchesi	+1D6 SAN
Kill Chester Walsh	+1D4 SAN
Apprehend Chester Walsh	+1D4 SAN
Destroy the whiskey stills	+1 SAN
Stop any more sacrifices on the obelisk	+1D6 SAN
Capture and turn Aden Porteur over to the authorities	+1D4 SAN

MYSTERIOUS MANUSCRIPTS

Von denen Verdammten

by John H. Crowe, III

Original text by Kazaj Heinz Vogel, 1700
Language: German **SAN Loss**: -1D3/-1D6 **Cthulhu Mythos**: +5% **Spell Multiplier**: x3
Study Time: 45 weeks **Spells**: This edition probably contains several spells including Contact Cyäegha (described in this article). The specifics are left in the hands of the Keeper.

Brendall edition by Edith Brendall, 1907
Language: German **SAN Loss**: -1D2/-1D6 **Cthulhu Mythos**: +4% **Spell Multiplier**: x2
Study Time: 32 weeks **Spells**: None

Von denen Verdammten is a book written from memory by Edith Brendall in 1907. Brendall was a German student who gained access to an untitled manuscript by Kazaj Heinz Vogel. Employing her astounding photographic memory to good use, she read the manuscript thoroughly and later transcribed it. The English translation of the title is "Of the Damned, or: A Treatise on the Hideous Cults of Old."

The original manuscript was penned around 1700 by Kazaj Heinz Vogel, a German who emigrated to America only to return home sometime later to write this blasphemous text. Vogel's fate is unknown, as he disappeared after producing the manuscript. Some speculate he died in a state prison while others suggest that he was eliminated by Church authorities. His manuscript was quickly suppressed and only two copies are known to survive today. Both are kept securely locked in German libraries, access to them being strictly controlled.

The story would probably have ended there were it not for the efforts of young Edith Brendall in 1907. Once she was able to reproduce the manuscript, she published it. Included in this new version were the results of research Brendall had conducted in light of information found in the text. Since no publisher was willing to touch *Von denen Verdammten*, Brendall had it printed at her own expense. Soon after, all bookstores which stocked it quickly sold out and copies in public libraries began to disappear. The location of all these copies is unknown; none have yet turned up at booksellers or in private collections.

Edith Brendall's fate was cause for further mystery. She moved from her native Hamburg-Altona to Berlin and then to Bonn. On March 27, 1910, she disappeared. Her body was found floating in the Rhine eight days later.

As the title implied, *Von denen Verdammten* focuses on ancient cults. One in particular was in the area of the village of Freihausgarten, Germany and was devoted to a little-known deity named Cyäegha, The Waiting Dark, Lord of the Caves. Long ago (and perhaps as recently as the middle of the nineteenth century), worshippers committed blood sacrifices on a nearby hill called *Dunkelhügel*, the Dark Hill. At some time in the distant past there was, according to legend, an actual stone temple to the dark god though if this is true, all signs of the temple have since vanished. Brendall, in her ver-

Excerpt

Irgendwo, auf einem einsamen Platz
Wo Sie niemals bleiben wollten
Irgendwann, in diesen leeren Raum
Werden Sie einen Weg finden
Das Pfad im Dunkeln

—original text

[Somewhere, in a lonely place
Where you would never want to stay
Somewhen, in that hollow space
There you will find a way
A way into darkness,
And Darkness, my name is.]

—Brendall edition

sion of *Von denen Verdammten*, included notes from her own research. These notes indicate that the stone temple was not mentioned anytime after 1850, implying that perhaps some ruins or remnants were still present up to that time. She also wrote of old, dark ceremonies that were conducted "at a dark and hidden place where they speak of The Waiting Dark." Some readers interpret this as a reference to the ruined temple. (*Liyuhh*, a rare German adaptation and analysis of *The R'leyh Text*, also mentions Cyäegha and the ruined temple.)

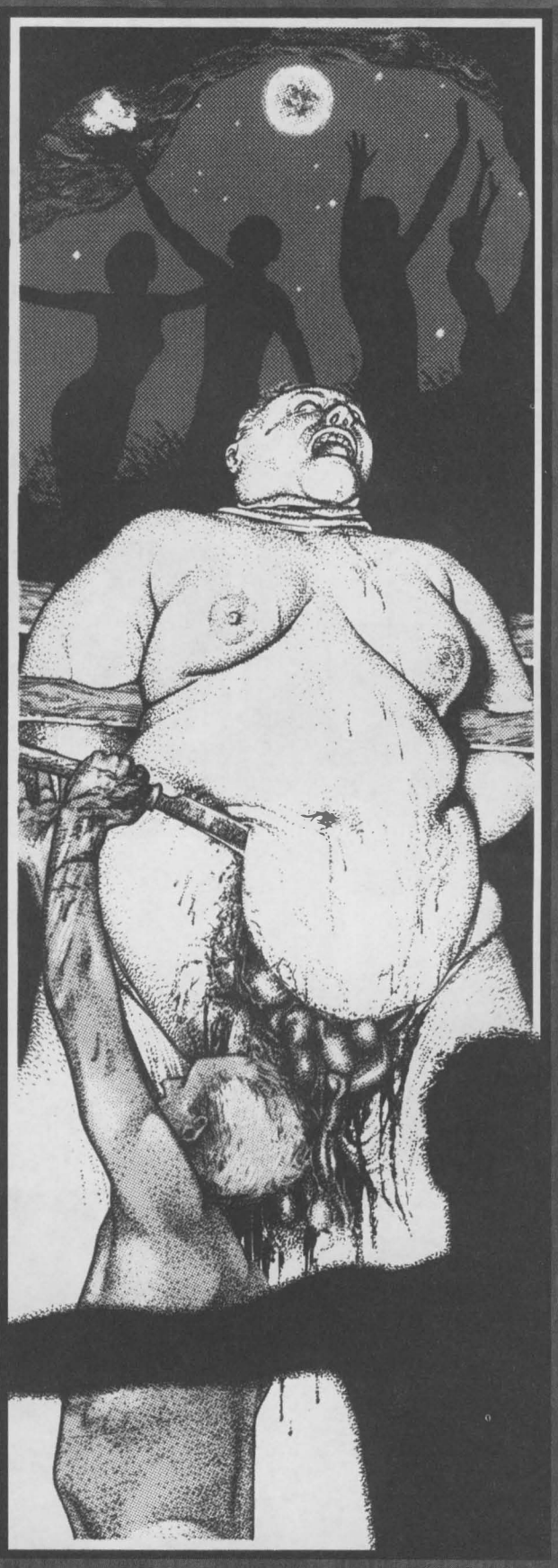
Von denen Verdammten has a dire reputation. Because of the Brendall case, many who know of the manuscript are loathe to seek it out.

New Spell

CONTACT CYÄEGHA: This is a rare spell which is possibly found only in *Von denen Verdammtem* and *Liyuhh*. The spell can be cast in two ways. If one spends the night of the full moon on *Dunkelhügel* (the Dark Hill) near the remote village of Freihausgarten, Germany, contact with the deity may be attempted (or may come spontaneously) via one's dreams. Otherwise, the spell requires one to perform a human sacrifice deep within a cave on the night of a full moon. Once the sacrifice has been completed and entreaties made to Cyäegha, he (it) may contact the worshipper via a vision.

Regardless of how the spell is performed, it costs the user one point of POW plus 1D6 SAN. The chance of success is equal to half of the user's Luck roll after the POW loss is taken into account. If contact is established, it will occur within a few hours and certainly before dawn.

There seems to be little point in using this spell. Cyäegha cares little for worshippers and only awaits the day that he is unleashed upon the world. Worship is likely more out of fear of the frightening entity than out of any real affinity for him/it.



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MYSTERIOUS MANUSCRIPTS

The Brick Cylinders of Kadatheron
by Dr. Casimir Liber

Dreamlands etchings of uncertain origin.
Cylinders One & Two:
Language: Dream **SAN Loss**: 0 **Cthulhu Mythos**: 0 **Dreaming Skill**: +5%
Dream Lore Skill: 1D10+10% **Spells**: None **Study Time**: 7 days in dream-time
CylinderThree:
Language: Dream **SAN Loss**: 1D4/1D8 **Cthulhu Mythos**: +5% **Spell Multiplier**: x3
Spells: 1D4+1 determined by Keeper **Study Time**: 8 days in dream-time
English Version of Cylinder Three:
Language: English **SAN Loss**: 1D3/1D6 **Cthulhu Mythos**: +4% **Spell Multiplier**: x2
Spells: Contact Being of Ib, Contact Bokrug **Study Time**: 21 hours of waking-time
Portuguese Version of Cylinder Three:
All stats same as English except for Language: Portuguese **and**
Spells: Anathema, Lambent Flame, Summon Blupe, Summon Lamp-Eft
Chinese Version of Cylinder Three:
All stats same as English except for Language: Mandarin Chinese **and**
Spells: Contact Bokrug, Emerald Darts of Ptath, Stupefying Blast, Viridian Wind

The original brick cylinders were a gift from Bokrug to the people of Kadatheron (or merely built in his name—the truth is unknown, the bricks millennia old) and are located near the Marketplace of the Blue Dromedary in the town centre. The cylinders are made of turquoise, navy blue, and dark green bricks; each cylinder is over ten feet high and a similar diameter. The cylinders are three in number and bear writings in Dream, readable by all. The first two bear the history and geography of Kadatheron and Western Dreamlands. The third beaers hidden mysteries and spells which many a travelling Dreamer has transcribed for personal use. However, different readers interpret the writings differently and thus different publications in the waking world reveal different spells. Three sample waking-world translations of this third cylinder are described below. Reading multiple versions of this text will not grant additional Mythos knowledge, but will cause a 1/1D3 SAN loss as the reader's mind is unhinged by how two texts can be simultaneously the same and totally different.

English Version: This was written by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1810, who intended to publish it but became alarmed when his griend Robert Southey showed him a too-similar text he picked up at an estate sale in Portugal some time previously. However, Southey was impressed with Coleridge's version and urged him to circulate a few copies to close friends, which Coleridge duly did. This version of the third cylinder is written in a poetic style similar to Coleridge's published works and was circulated in octavo format, decorated in various shades of abstractly-stylized blues and greens so reminescent of the quasimarine Bnazic Desert to any that have Dreamed thither.

Portuguese Version: This version, written in the form of handwritten notes dated 1750, was found at an estate sale in Lisbon by Robert Southey and was taken by him to Keswick in Yorkshire. It is unknown whether any copies were made or where the original is now.

Chinese Version: Written in Mandarin in 1785 by an unknown author, this version was recently noted to be on sale in a bookshop in Hong Kong. A scholar browsing in the shop noted the bookseller, a Mr. Devon Yu, to be watching carefully anyone who perused the copy.

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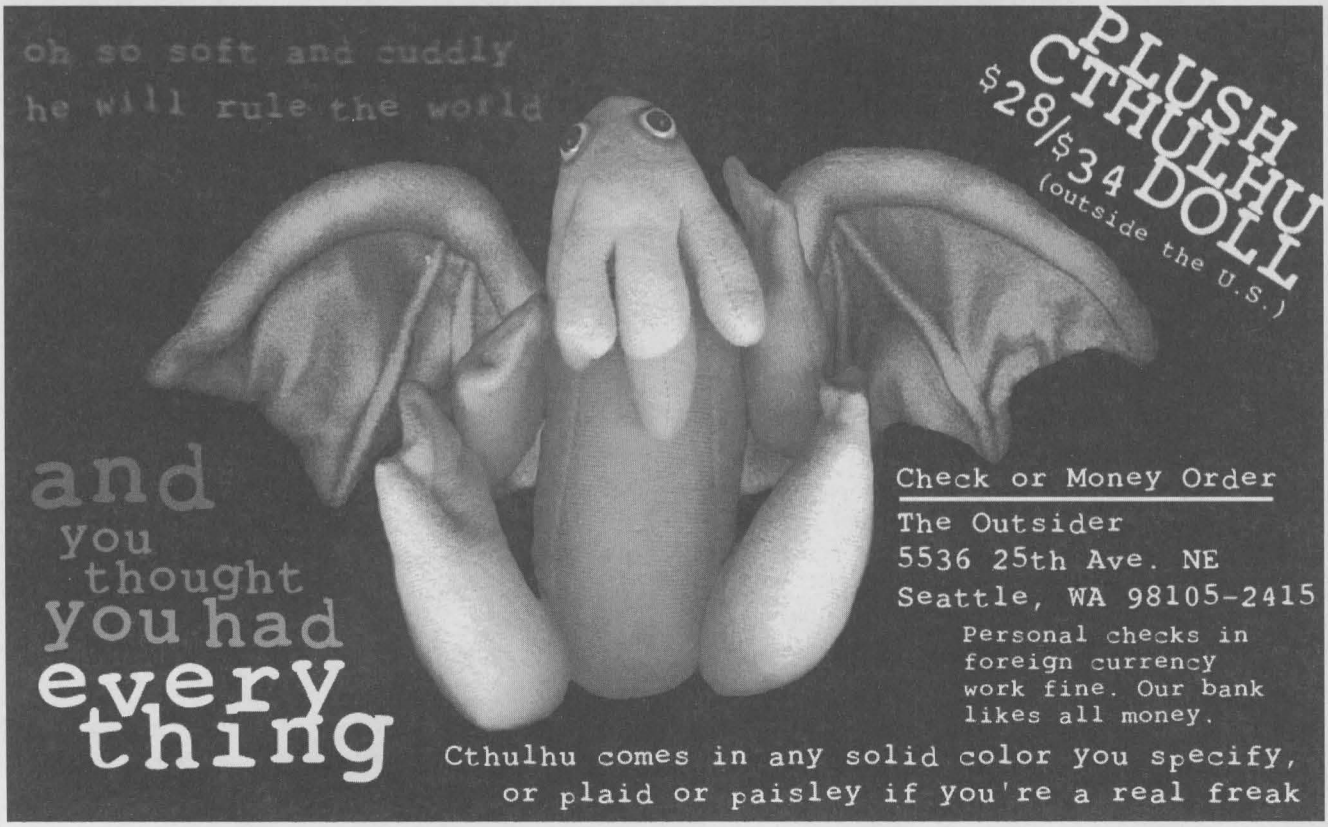


A TALE OF TERROR

The Willowdales
by Michael Cisco

A pair of very strange people have moved into an investigator's home town—perhaps right next door. They may be man and wife, or brother and sister, or both. Martin and Asta Willowdale are diminutive people of indeterminate age, resembling nothing so much as a pair of precocious eleven-year-olds. In appearance, they are both extremely pale, with dark, glossy hair; Martin wears his quite short, while Asta binds hers in a tight, perpendicular knot that sticks straight up from the top of her head. Their faces are essentially identical—round and elflike with tiny noses, large dark eyes, delicate, thin-lipped mouths, and exceptionally even, pearly, somewhat pointed-looking teeth. They are the same height: 4'7". In person, they are open and friendly, cordial hosts and highly conscientious guests (punctual, too). It is clear that they have an unusually passionate relationship. A faint accent, of indeterminate origin, is detectable when they speak, and their voices have a queer sort of piping quality. They are, by all accounts, independently wealthy. Yet, despite the perfection of their deportment and their easy, frank manner, there is something unnerving about them, as if they would go on smiling and chatting with each other while you were dying of a heart attack only a few feet away. What's more, they seem to be up to something funny in that house (or apartment) of theirs—there is one room that they never let anyone see, and, in that room, they apparently carry on some kind of arcane activity late into the night: different colored lights, musical sounds, even chanting. And they're both so secretive—they have nothing too definite to say about their pasts, and they don't seem ever to leave the immediate vicinity of their home (their groceries are delivered and, yes, there is an awful lot of fresh meat being brought to their door). The chanting and the lights come out with increasing frequency—from once a month or so to once a week, from once a week to once every few days, then every day, then for longer and longer every day…

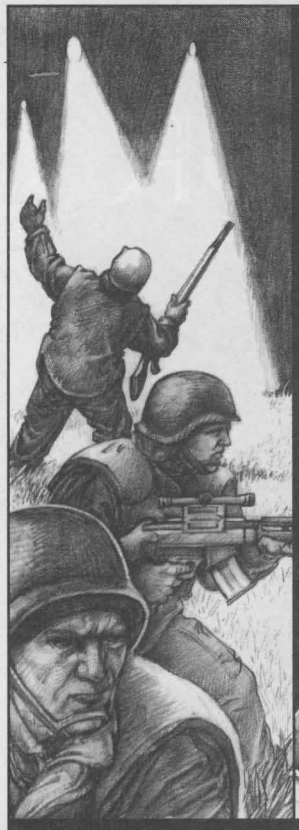
Possibilities

1. The Willowdales are incestuous twins, born and bred by the descendants of some of Ludvig Prinn's less-appetizing acquaintances. They were raised in ghoul tunnels (hence the pallor and love of raw meat) and have close and warm relations with ghouls around the world. Subsequently, they have become freelance villains for a variety of Mythos beings; owing mostly to the raw, bloody meat, the Willowdales are actually well over a hundred years old each. The nightly rituals are, in fact, a souped-up version of the "Mindblast" spell, whereby they are turning a room in their house or apartment into a POW-charged locus from whence a "Wave of Madness" shall be caused to emanate on a particular night, just after sunset. Everyone within five miles of the room will lose 1/1D6 SAN and go temporarily insane until sunrise unless they can make three consecutive SAN rolls at their current SAN rating after the initial loss. Keepers should exempt the investigators (most of them, anyway) from the effect, or he could fudge their SAN rolls. The result is a night of widespread rioting, chaos, looting, and depravity, generating enormous amounts of energy for the Lloigor, for whom the Willowdales are currently working. Investigators should be treated to a panorama of unusual and aberrant human behavior at every turn. Only powerful magics or direct action against the Willowdales themselves can cancel the spell's effect.

2. The Willowdales are the result of certain cultic machinations—specifically a program of selective breeding over several generations, ultimately at the urgings of the Lloigor. Their ancestors have been rather eccentrically "human," and have bequeathed them a genetic heritage complete with "trapdoor genes"—genes that, magically activated, could have any one of a variety of effects, from turning them into high POW, semitangible wights to proto-shoggoths, or living dimensional gates. Martin and Asta are cousins (and lovers, having no one else to turn to, and unsure of the safety of having sex with—well, anyone else), and both are twenty years old. Raised as orphans among the Basque, they recently discovered their true heritage and fled in panic. Over the years they have both acquired some Mythos knowledge, and now they are using it to keep themselves safe from detection by the Lloigor and their minions. The nightly rituals are designed to safeguard them—the room is being imbued with a sort of combination Curse of Darkness/Eibon's Wheel of Mist/Elder Sign/Seal of Isis, designed to give them an impregnable refuge against their pursuers. These may be partially effective, but the Lloigor will find them sooner or later, and then the investigators can expect telekinetic forces and vortex attacks in their neighborhood. At some point they may demand to know what is going on, or perhaps the Willowdales will come to the investigators for help.

3. The Willowdales are a pair of unhinged occult adventurers and scientific geniuses whose similarity of appearance is the result of an especially idiosyncratic version of the "Resurrection" spell performed on the two of them shortly after they were massacred by Tcho-Tchos. They are married, in their thirties, and, despite a wild past of nonstop, mind-blasting escapades, they have retained the better part of their SAN. At the moment, they are engaged in extensive experimentation with Limbo travel, using a form of the Create Limbo Gate spell built into one of the many unusual devices that they store in the secret room. They are routinely visited by Cats from Saturn, who have been fetching bits of alien technology for them (mostly in return for all that raw meat). Most of their activities are fairly harmless, but, should they be tipped over the edge into insanity, with their knowledge there's no telling what horrific damage they could do. This one could go either way: the investigators could join the Willowdales in their adventures, or take it upon themselves to stop the Willowdales.

A *Tale of Terror* is a short scenario premise, with three different possibilities for what's really going on. Keepers can mine them for ideas, taking that which appeals and discarding that which does not.



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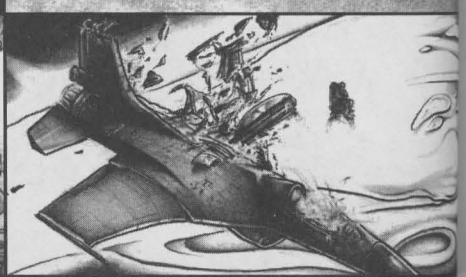


HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT FILM FESTIVAL

PORTLAND, OREGON • OCTOBER 4-6 1996

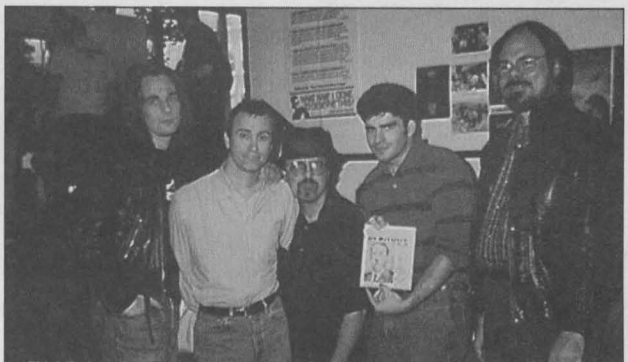
FIELD REPORT BY JOHN TYNES

A dim room...flickering lights...a crowd of mewling devotés of the outré. Just another ritual sacrifice? Not likely, boyo—this particular group of cultists had descended on an innocuous movie theater in Portland, Oregon for the first **H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival**.

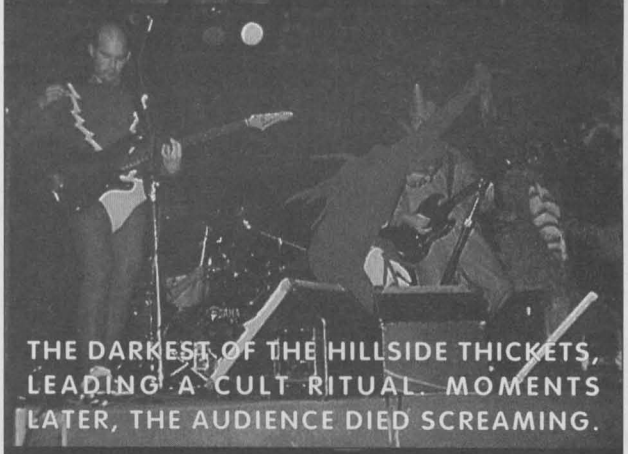
Sponsored by Andrew Migliore's Beyond Books with a little help from Pagan Publishing, the festival drew a capacity crowd eager to see some cinematic mayhem. The festival's guests of honor included actor Jeffrey Combs (*Re-Animator*, *The Frighteners*), screenwriter Miguel Tejada-Flores (*Fright Night 2*, the upcoming *Re-Animator: Alter Ego*), director John Strysik (*The Music of Erich Zann*, four seasons of *Tales From the Darkside*), and writer/director Aaron Vanek (*The Outsider*). Also featured was a band dear to many cultist hearts, Cthulhu's good-time boys The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets.

A dealer's room was set up in the lobby of the theater, with goodies from Pagan Publishing, Robert Gavora Bookseller, Waterloo Games, and Bowen Designs. Actor Jeffrey Combs was also on hand to sign Cthulhu souvenirs (including, curiously, a vintage copy of *Weird Tales*). After the crowd of murderous fiends spent all the blood-spattered cash in their pockets and collected enough signatures to fill a checkbook, the show got underway.

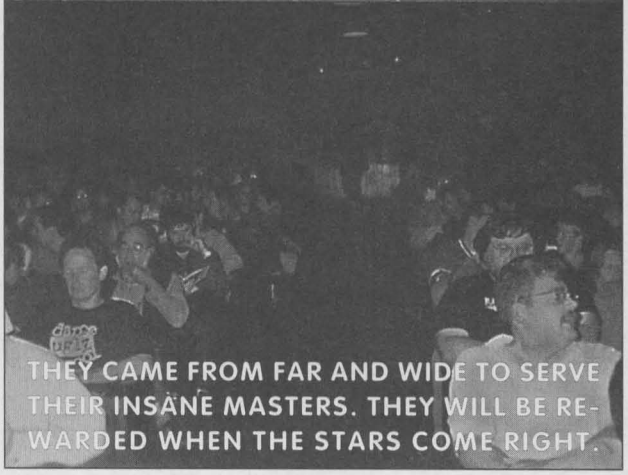
Migliore screened assorted trailers for past Lovecraftian films, and then got on with the main show: screenings of the short subjects *The Music of Erich Zann* and *The Outsider*, and the feature film *Necronomicon* (this was prior to its video release). Following the films, the crowd fled the marauding investigators and met at a secret cult headquarters (disguised as the Mt. Tabor Theater & Pub) to shake their tentacles to the music of The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets. Satiated with blood and celluloid, the cackling mob fled once more to the four corners of the earth, there to plot and plan and await the coming of the 1997 H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival. See you there!



THE HIGH PRIESTS: AARON VANEK, JEFFREY COMBS, MIGUEL TEJADA-FLORES, ANDREW MIGLIORE, AND JOHN STRYSIK.



THE DARKEST OF THE HILLSIDE THICKETS, LEADING A CULT RITUAL. MOMENTS LATER, THE AUDIENCE DIED SCREAMING.



THEY CAME FROM FAR AND WIDE TO SERVE THEIR INSANE MASTERS. THEY WILL BE REWARDED WHEN THE STARS COME RIGHT.

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Continued from p. 5

The Mangler
surprisingly good horror film
starring Robert Englund, Ted Levine and Daniel Matmor
directed by Tobe Hooper
screenplay by Tobe Hooper, Stephen Brooks and Peter Welbeck
reviewed by Michael J. Varhola

Dismemberment, depravity, and deformity are the hallmarks of *The Mangler*, a recent video release that revolves around a hulking, possessed piece of equipment that grabs, crushes, and folds up its victims.

The Mangler is an exceptionally well-made, bleak horror film. This is especially impressive when one considers that it is based on the Stephen King short story of the same name and that it stars Robert Englund. It is, in fact, probably the best film based on a Stephen King work ever made.

The Mangler is set in an industrial laundry, a Dickens-style workhouse in Maine staffed by unfortunate white trash and built around an obscenely massive, Kafka-esque sheet folder, a "mangler."

Robert Englund, progressively less amusing in his role as Freddy Krueger in successive *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies, excels in *The Mangler* as Blue Ribbon laundry owner Bill Gartley. In a few early scenes he comes off as an understudy to Long John Silver, staggering about on crutches and yammering "Arrrgh!" Overall, however, his performance is exceptionally creepy and convincing.

Mumbly-mouthed Ted Levine plays jaded homicide cop John Hunton. Viewers may recognize him from *Silence of the Lambs*, where he played psychopath Jame Gumb; it is not always easy to mentally divorce Levine from that role when watching him in this film.

Thankfully, Stephen King himself does not appear in the film, or if he does it is in a completely non-intrusive way, rather than through the idiotic caperings that characterize most of his silver screen cameos.

The Mangler is fertile ground for Keepers, and Englund is a true cultist. "Everyone has to make sacrifices," he repeatedly says, the implication being the self-sacrifice of his workers' toil. As the film develops, however, it becomes clear that the word sacrifice has a much more explicit meaning...

Surprisingly, there are no nude scenes in the film, despite ample opportunities for them. This, and several other features, ironically makes *The Mangler* more like an HPL story than many of the movies based on his own works.

The Mangler does have a few low points. Of note is a scene where a dying man expectorates blood directly at the camera lens, reminiscent of something from the cutting-room floor of a dog like *Amityville 3D*. There is also some confusing dialogue about the herb belladonna, which is oddly referred to as "the hand of glory," an altogether different item. The fact that belladonna is sometimes a component of antacids also comes up, but the assertion that this information would be common knowledge for a cop and a New Age weenie is a bit silly (I had to deliberately research this fact just to verify that it had a possibility of being true).

However, the film's negative points are few and minor, and some of the scenes are especially effective. One of the best is a scene near the climax that is suggestive of a descent into Hell. Another such scene is a harrowing attempt to exorcise the mangler, a method of attacking the machine that is more impressive and believable than the pseudo-magical resolutions to demonic phenomenae adopted by many recent films (not the least irritating of which was the use of enchanted party favors in *Needful Things*).

There are also many nice details, which HPL fans are sure to appreciate. Among these are the appearance of Frazer's *Golden Bough*, a real-world text on the occult that the protagonists refer to. Also, unlike many so-called horror films, the characters are realistically shaken by what they experience and witness.

The Mangler is a chilling, dark, effective film, and inflicts 9.5 phobias.

Necronomicon
starring Jeffrey Combs, David Warner
produced by Brian Yuzna
written by Brent V. Freidman
directed by Christophe Gans, Shusuke Kaneko & Brian Yuzna
reviewed by John Tynes

The creators of the films *Re-Animator* and *From Beyond* are back with a new Lovecraft movie—well, sort of. *Re-Animator* director Stuart Gordon is nowhere to be seen, but his collaborator Brian Yuzna is on hand. The film was made back around 1994 or so, but was only released on videotape in the U.S. in late 1996.

Necronomicon is an assembly of three Mythos stories, each by a different writer and director, and connected by a framing sequence in which good old H.P. Lovecraft himself ventures into a cult monastary/library to consult the *Necronomicon*. He steals the keys

to the chamber where the cult keeps the *Necronomicon* and proceeds to read the three tales that follow. Why are these tales written in the *Necronomicon*? Beats me. Why do two of them clearly happen in the 1990s, while Lovecraft is reading the book in the 1930s? Beats me. It must be non-Euclidean or something.

The first story starts as an adaptation of "The Rats in the Walls," but the only connection to that story is that some guy named de la Poer inherits the old family estate. The rest of the story has to do with him resurrecting his drowned wife with the aid of some Cthulhu-ish creature that lives in the sea caves below the estate. Mayhem ensues. This is probably the best story of the lot.

The second story is a loose but not totally off-beam adaptation of "Cool Air." Imagine that the doctor in "Cool Air" has a female assistant who secretly loves him, but that instead of the male narrator moving in, a pretty young female moves in whom the doctor falls in love with. Imagine also that the doctor needs spinal fluid to survive and hence kills people (with help) to get it. Finally, imagine that the doctor is played by David Warner, which he is. I enjoyed this tale because of Warner's performance and because the story at least stayed within the ballpark of HPL's tale, though there were some major, major departures. It doesn't work quite as tightly as the first story and kind of drags, but it's comparable.

The third story is just bad beyond belief. It's a gory tale that feels like it's been lifted from Clive Barker, until you realize that the funky flying things are supposed to be Mi-go. Bad, bad, bad, from start to finish. Just awful. Body parts everywhere, buckets of blood, cheesy special effects, a nonsensical storyline, and—did I mention it was bad? Horrible. It's not worth a summary.

The climax of the movie brings us back to Lovecraft in the cult library. Because he's taken the *Necronomicon* out of its safe and read these forbidden tales (pity the poor man), someone has to be sacrificed to some awful Thing From Beyond in payment. Fortunately, our boy H.P. has his *sword cane* handy—yes, that's right—and is able to drive off the tentacled monster that tries to eat him. Then he rips the face off the evil cult monk and feeds him to the Thing From Beyond. Having pulled his Indiana Jones act, Lovecraft barrels out of the cult library with the *Necronomicon* in hand and hops in a cab.

No, I'm not kidding.

So there you have it: *Necronomicon*, the latest adaptation of HPL's cosmic vision onto the silver screen. I have to admit that the first time I saw the film, I thought it was mostly a piece of crap. (Jeffrey Combs *is* thoroughly enjoyable as Lovecraft and the scenes with him are fun.) But I then had the fortunate opportunity to see *Necronomicon* in a real movie theater, on the big screen as it were, and I liked it a lot better. Seen in a theater, the film's production values and solid cinematography are much more compelling, and the weak stories are given strength as a result. It's more or less worth a $3 rental if your hopes aren't too high, but if for some reason you have a chance to see it in a movie theater, definitely give it another spin. I originally gave *Necronomicon* 3 phobias on video, but I'll up that to 5 for seeing it in a theater.

In The Mouth of Madness
staring Sam Neil, Julie Carmen, Jurgen Prochnow, John Glover, and Charlton Heston
produced by Sandy King
written by Michael De Luca
directed by John Carpenter
reviewed by Brian Sammons

Some time ago I came to the conclusion that Hollywood had completely turned its back on the horror genre. Can you name the last good horror film to come to the theaters? I can't. So imagine my delight when I heard about a new movie called *In the Mouth of Madness*. This was a multi-million dollar project based loosely on the works of HPL. Finally, a Lovecraft movie coming to the big screen with a real budget, instead of all the direct-to-video trash we're assailed with year after year. It would have big stars in it, including Sam Neil (of *Jurassic Park*), Jurgen Prochnow (from *Das Boot*) and Charlton Heston, who has been in more films then you can count. Perhaps the best thing about *Madness* was the man directing it, none other than John Carpenter. This is the man responsible for making such horror greats as *Halloween*, *The Fog*, and *The Thing*, to name only a few. With all this going for it, *In the Mouth of Madness* had to be a great movie, right? Wrong.

From the start, the movie is bad and it only gets worse. Sam Neil plays John Trent, an insurance-fraud investigator hired by a big publishing house to find a missing writer. The author is Sutter Cain (Jurgen Prochnow), who writes Lovecraft-style books about creepy monsters, madness, and Great Old ones. Trent thinks it's only a publicity stunt, but takes the job of finding him anyway.

What happens next is a long, drawn-out, inept investigation where John wanderers around New York. He meets Sutter's "spooky" fans and has numerous dreams (far, far too many) of a cop beating up a spray-painting kid. Why? I don't know, the audience is never

told why. Finally, in a flash of inspiration (or the filmmaker's desperation), Trent figures out that Sutter is hiding in a small, reportedly fictional, New England town. So it's off to Lovecraft country he goes with a female sidekick—his liaison to the publishing house.

The town is magically found, then glossed over very quickly and never thoroughly explored. What is meant to be horrifying in this place is only weird and surreal at best. These include scenes of a boy riding his bike who ages very quickly, and metamorphic children are seen chasing a dog all over Hell and back for no reason. Perhaps the most memorable scene of the movie has a mob of gun-toting townsfolk going after Sutter Cain. Cain confronts them at "the Black Church," and as a show of his dark, limitless, powers he summons from the furthest reaches of Hell and beyond...Dobermans. Yes, Dobermans, about six of them. Oh, how scary.

Top off this wonderful story with unconvincing, stiff, and downright boring acting. Sam Neil portrays his character not so much hard-boiled, but like a rock. You can't root for this guy, he's too cold. When confronted with strange happenings, he mechanically spits out his "head in the sand" reply and moves on. Nothing solved, no impression made.

John's partner (played by Julie Carmen) is his opposite in every way, equally annoying but in a different way. She has a tendency to overplay her part, being terrified when she should be frightened. She too-easily believes in the weirdness that is happening to them, with no disbelief at all. You would think she was in on it with Cain.

Sutter Cain is the only remotely interesting character in the movie. Unfortunately, Jurgen Prochnow is not seen much and is pretty strapped for lines. Most of the time he walks around with a menacing, evil smirk, which is the high-water mark for acting in this film. He manages to look in good humor, yet malevolent as he types the last chapter to the book that will open the gates for his masters.

This movie could have been great, should have been great, but wasn't. It could have done without the "reality-warping" effects they tried (and failed) to pull off, in lieu of more Lovecraftian touches. Some mysterious piping, and folks with the "Innsmouth look" would have been a big improvement over a kid on his bike and Satanic Dobermans. Despite its Cthulhu Mythos-derived plot of "Old Ones" and the idea of someone writing a new 1990s version of the *Necronomicon*, this film was only mildly entertaining at best. The few quick glimpses of the Old Ones you get to see are nifty, but the movie's poor acting and muddled plot line greatly overshadows them.

If you are looking for a good, scary movie, then try Carpenter's classics like *Halloween* or *The Fog*, as they are some of the best horror films made. If you are looking for a peek at what could be Cthulhu's cousins, or to see another bad film interpretation of Lovecraft's ideas, then you might want to give *In the Mouth of Madness* a try. For those reasons alone I give *Madness* 2 phobias out of 10.

Cthulhu Strikes Back
mythos music CD
by The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets
Great Old One Music, $12.00
reviewed by Christian Klepac

There was a time when the faint of heart of tender of ear could play off the accomplishments of the Darkest of the Hillside Thickets with a laugh. "Oh wow, a rock band from Canada that plays songs about the Cthulhu Mythos, that's really amusing." As of the release of their new CD, *Cthulhu Strikes Back*, that time has passed.

If you have never experienced the Darkest of the Hillside Thickets, this album will shock you, guaranteed. Cthulhu Mythos disciples who have heard about the band from publications like this one will be amazed that such die-hard cultists would take so much time away from their orgies and ritual sacrifices to learn how to really play their instruments. The Thickets *can* play, and their song-writing skills have advanced considerably since their last album, *Cthulhuriffomania* (now out of print). Those who have discovered this band because of their music instead of their ethos will be equally dumbfounded by their relentless dedication to the noble purpose of preparing Earth for Cthulhu's glorious return. For listeners who are enthralled both by Lovecraft's stories and by catchy pop-punk noise-rock, *Cthulhu Strikes Back* might be sufficient impetus to run screaming naked into the street to light things on fire.

Lyrically, the overriding message is: They're serious. Humor is, of course, still a major ingredient in the Thickets' mix: there's a song about dropping shoggoths from a B-17 onto an unsuspecting public, and singer Toren Atkinson does an all-out Elvis impression on "Yig Snake Daddy." However, the album also contains several moments that are genuinely disturbing. In "Unstoppable," Toren rants about having his mind forcibly opened by the Great Old Ones; "Charnel Dreams" is as earnest and inspiring a sermon on the Cthulhu Mythos as I've ever heard; and "HVW," well, you'd have to hear that one to believe it. The lyrics really are what sets this band apart, and

they are printed on the inside of the CD package, making this album worth buying even if you don't enjoy the music. My favorite rhyme is "invisible mass" and "fishery gas."

The packaging is professionally slick and the cover art is very humorous (I won't spoil the surprise) but the production, also professionally slick, is perhaps my only complaint. I've heard that this band is a truly awesome spectacle in live performance, but it's kind of hard to tell from the smooth, radio-friendly way in which *Cthulhu Strikes Back* was recorded. I admit that this is a matter of personal taste, and the songs themselves are so intense that in my opinion they overcome this fault throughout most of the album anyway.

Buy this CD, support this band. You'll wonder how you worshipped Cthulhu without it. 10 screaming, itching phobias for this puppy and a quote from "Protein" to wrap this review up:

I had a dream the crawling chaos said
"I want you to fill everyone up with lead."
He filled me up with protein, I gave the magic sign,
He gave me x-ray vision and now the world is mine.

Yes, yes, yes.

H.P. Lovecraft: A Life
biography of the gentleman from Providence
written by S.T. Joshi
Necronomicon Press, $20.00
reviewed by John Tynes

It is so very, frustratingly, rare these days to find a creative work that truly excels—and yet our society is saturated with so-called creative works at a rate seemingly unprecedented in modern history. One might think that amidst this massive flow of creativity, there would be a substantial amount that is an appreciable cut above the rest. One might think that the cream would rise to the top, as it were. Instead, the really remarkable works of creativity seem to be fewer than ever. It is as if the quantity of quality remains constant, while the quantity of dross doubles fortnightly—a sad state of affairs.

Chalk one up for the home team. S.T. Joshi, far and away the foremost Lovecraft scholar working in the field, has produced a work so encompassing in its conception, so exacting in its execution, and so enjoyable in its presentation that one is unlikely to read a truly superior book for some time afterwards.

Joshi, for those who are just joining us, is the scholar responsible for rescuing Lovecraft's work from the mire of editorial changes, deletions, and desecrations of decades past and presenting the unexpurgated critical editions of Lovecraft's work published by Arkham House in a series of definitive volumes during the last ten years. Joshi also serves as editor of the journal *Lovecraft Studies* from Necronomicon Press, is the author of *H.P. Lovecraft: An Annotated Bibliography*, and has distinguished himself time and again as the foremost champion of Lovecraft's literary and epistolary legacy. He is, in short, about as qualified to write a biography of Lovecraft as one could imagine.

Okay, so he's a preeminent scholar. But can he write? Does he display a biographer's keen eye, or does he merely present a bald recitation of bland facts? Happily, the answer is evident in even a brief skimming of the book's contents: Joshi is a delightful writer, approaching the material with compassion, insight, and even—where necessary—both humor and sorrow.

This is the definitive Lovecraft biography. Joshi has given us an engaging, challenging, and ultimately moving portrait of one of the leading lights of the 20th century. He treats every facet of Lovecraft in appropriate detail: his life, his work, his friends, his dreams, his philosophy, and on and on. Joshi, Curwen-like, takes Lovecraft's essential salts and from them brings him to life before our eyes.

These words of praise for Joshi cannot be considered complete without similar praise for his co-author. The book makes such extensive use of quotations from the letters of H.P. Lovecraft that HPL may almost be seen as Joshi's partner in the endeavor. Everywhere, Joshi has carefully mined Lovecraft's hundreds of thousands of epistolary words and allowed the man to speak for himself on nearly every page. The result frequently smacks of a conversation, held between equals. Lovecraft's writing has never seemed more vibrant, more expressive, or more personal than in these countless epistolary excerpts, and they go far towards humanizing Lovecraft.

I cannot recommend this book highly enough. It is a wonderful read, full of everything that makes life worth living. Every perception of Lovecraft you have will be shattered and remade anew. Facile characterizations of the man and his work will fall away like scales from your eyes. Joshi's book is a triumph of the biographer's art, and will reward your every moment of attention. He makes Lovecraft live.

Giving this book a phobia rating of 10 out of 10 fails to encompass more than a fraction of its merits, but it's the best we can do. Buy, read, enjoy.

Daily Life in Elizabethan England
a handbook for 16th century living
by Jeffrey L. Singman

Greenwood Press, $45
reviewed by Michael J. Varhola

Had you lived in 16th century England, what would you have done to earn your daily bread? If this question ever crossed your mind, you probably imagined yourself as a member of the aristocracy, wearing fine clothes and sporting a rapier, supping from big trenchers of meat and living in a Tudor-style manor house.

Such a vision is logical, because most history books, novels, and movies depict only the upper crust of a society. In point of fact, such people represent only a small portion of the population, and most people led radically different lives. Most people in England or America today do not have "lifestyles of the rich and famous" even vaguely like those of the people whose names will be read in history books four centuries hence.

Daily Life in Elizabethan England, the latest addition to the Greenwood Press "Daily Life Through History" series, is an invaluable book. It accurately and comprehensively shows how the vast majority of people lived, what they ate, where they dwelled, what they did for a living, what they believed, and how they spent their leisure time. This fine work does not neglect the upper classes; rather, it relegates them to their appropriate place in an overall view of Elizabethan society.

One of the most interesting aspects of this volume is that it is a product of the living history movement, and everything in it has been applied by reenactors and other living historians. Thus, *Daily Life in Elizabethan England* is not just a reference work: it is a handbook, a how-to guide to life in the England of Queen Elizabeth.

The book is divided into acknowledgements, an introduction, eight chapters, a glossary, three appendices, notes, a bibliography, and an index. This latter feature makes the book quite usable as a reference in which it is easy to find information on a desired subject. Chapters cover broad areas, such as "The Living Environment," "Clothing and Accoutrements," and "Entertainments."

Here are some of the features that make it very useful and Keeper-friendly:

- Tables showing relative values of currency, dollar equivalents, income for people at all strata of society, and sample costs of various staples and commodities. This sort of information is very useful for figuring out how much investigators should get paid for jobs, how much to bribe local constables, or how much it will cost to equip a party. Also, having authentic names for currency adds color (*e.g.*, "Although ragged in appearance, the man's pouch is full of Dutch gold florins," followed by a translation of their value is much better than, "The man has $600 in his pouch."). Expressing everything merely in dollar terms is convenient, but a bit artificial.
- Lists of all observed holy days, with descriptions of how the major ones were celebrated. Some really interesting and unpredictable information is contained here. For example: Shrovetide (the day before Ash Wednesday) was often a day when the apprentices would riot—typically against those who transgressed sexual mores, such as prostitutes.
- Art. The book is replete with clean black-and-white line illustrations depicting a wide variety of subjects including floor plans of houses, pictures of coinage, contemporary woodcuts, depictions of people doing things that convey information about garb, occupations, and activities, and patterns for clothing.
- Clear information on morals, morés, and attitudes. This is addressed realistically, and the book acknowledges openly that many people did not adhere to the predominant moral code. A section on justice is also very useful; e.g., most Keepers will correctly guess that sorcery was a capital crime in Elizabethan England; few will guess that theft of anything worth more than about $25 was also punishable by death.
- Patterns and directions for making period clothing. This is, of course, of use to anyone who wants to know about 16th century English apparel. However, such a feature is of even greater interest to those who wish to make their own period clothing, for wear to game conventions or live-action games.
- Recipes of 16th century fare. In addition to just learning about the food Elizabethans ate, enterprising readers can try to concoct some themselves for an authentic taste of the past (any game is certain to be a bit livelier if the participants are drinking spiced beer or hippocras, a mulled red wine…).
- Pastimes and Games. Included here are descriptions of the theater (remember, Shakespeare was an Elizabethan), martial sports, and rules for games. The games are especially interesting, and run the gamut from physical games like football (a far more violent sport than any modern game bearing the same name) to table games like "Fox and Geese."
- Songs and dances. Words to popular songs and accompanying music are, like the food, informa-

tive at the least and allow for interactive role-playing at the other end of the spectrum. Descriptions and directions for dances can further add color to a Keeper's narration of a social scene (how much better to say, "The couples in the inn are dancing 'the Hunting of the Fox,' with one couple dancing through an arch made with the arms of the rest...," rather than "Uh, yeah, the people are dancing. Yup, just dancing.").

Despite the fact that *Daily Life in Elizabethan England* is quite comprehensive, it is not overwhelming. The material is easily accessible and presented clearly and concisely. A possible criticism is that the book is somewhat redundant, but this only serves to reinforce fundamental facts about Elizabethan society.

At $45 in hardback, this book is not cheap. However, it would be accurate to say that it is an indispensable asset to anyone wishing to set a scenario or story during the time of Elizabeth.

A truly well-done book, *Daily Life in Elizabethan England* warrants a full 10 phobias. Credit card orders for the book can be made by calling Greenwood Publishing Group at 1-800-225-5800.

❧

The Disciples of Cthulhu
a classic anthology returns
edited by Edward P. Berglund
Chaosium, $10.95
reviewed by C.L. Werner

For the tenth volume in their ever-growing Cthulhu Cycle, Chaosium has reprinted a true classic—Edward Berglund's *The Disciples of Cthulhu*. Out of print since its original run back in 1976, *The Disciples of Cthulhu* remains one of the best all-original Mythos anthologies, second only perhaps to Arkham House's *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* and it is a close second at that.

A few changes have been made to the roster. Two stories have been replaced, Lin Carter's "Zoth-Ommog" (perhaps his only entertaining Mythos story) and the mediocre Joseph Payne Brennan tale "The Feaster from Afar." The Carter tale is deleted in anticipation of a future Cycle book, *The Zothic Cycle*, which will feature Lin Carter's Mythos fiction. The Brennan story is omitted due to the editor's inability to locate a representative for the author's estate. In their places, Berglund has collected A.A. Attanasio's "Glimpses"—which had originally been intended for *Disciples* before winding up in *Nameless Places*—and a new story by Robert M. Price.

The roster of *Disciples* includes some of the best Lovecraftian horror to be found. Ramsey Campbell's wonderful "The Tugging" is among the British author's best, a tale in which the worship of the Old Ones is passed along like a hereditary cancer of the soul. Fritz Leiber's masterful "The Terror from the Depths" reads like a genuine *Weird Tales* story and was noteworthy enough to be included in the reprint of *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*. "The Fairground Horror" by Brian Lumley is a fitting piece for a volume entitled *Disciples of Cthulhu* and is one of his best, lacking the foolishness of the Titus Crow stories. Eddy C. Bertin's excellent "Darkness, My Name Is" features one of the most hideous Great Old Ones, the blasphemous Cyaegha and a German setting which rings as true as the church bells of Bremen. "Where Yidhra Walks," by Walter C. DeBill Jr. is yet another superior story in which an unfortunate traveler discovers a town of Dunwich-like decadence in west Texas.

There are a few mediocre tales as well. "The Silence of Erika Zann" by James Wade is interesting, but not especially so, certainly not in a collection like this. Bob van Laerhoven's "All-eye" is another mediocre tale which suffers from uneven levels of writing and an awkward ending. "Glimpses" might fit in this latter category, as well. While the first part of the story is impressive and has a sort of "Orpheus and the Underworld" quality to it, the second part is simply too great a different in setting, action, and tone to work well.

Only one story in this new version of *Disciples of Cthulhu* is actually dreadful. Robert M. Price's "Dope War of the Black Tong" borrows Robert E. Howard's Steve Harrison and River Street as well as Lin Carter's Dr. Zarnak for what is supposedly a Howardian tale of action and horror. Instead, we get a stumbling story of Tcho-tchos, Stygian Black Lotus, and a spectral Lloigor in a dreadful parody not of Howard but of the pulp-era crimebusters such as the Shadow and the Spider. Although he tries hard, Price proves that he is more comfortable with more cerebral writing such as "Wilbur Whateley Waiting."

The cover art for *Disciples* is again done by Harry Fassl with a handful of interior illustrations by Earl Geier. The original introduction by the late Robert Bloch rounds out the book.

Disciples of Cthulhu rates 10 phobias. Place it behind Lovecraft, *Mysteries of the Worm* and *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, but ahead of everything else.

❧

Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft
copyright-free collection of diabolic illustrations
by Ernst and Johanna Lehner
Dover Publications, Inc., $8.95
reviewed by Michael J. Varhola

Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft is a collection of black-and-white illustrations from a variety of historical sources including occult tomes and manuscripts, bibles, newspapers, handbills, ancient wall carvings, poison-bottle labels, and artist's compilations.

The collection of 244 images is 174 pages long and divided into 12 chapters: Devils and Demons, Casus Luciferi, Faust and Mephistopheles, Hell and Damnation, The Apocalyptic Horsemen, Witches and Warlocks, Witch-Hunting, Ars Moriendi, Danse Macabre, Memento Mori, Resurrection and Reckoning, and Religio-Political Devilry.

The book includes a broad variety of illustrations, from crude woodcuts of witches paying homage to Satan to complex Albrecht Durer depictions of infernal subjects. Most of the illustrations are derived from medieval and Renaissance European sources, and reflect a Judeo-Christian concept of the infernal (a few divine images also slip into the collection, in depictions of war-in-heaven episodes). There are some pictures from other sources as well, including Babylonian and Egyptian. The subject matter and scope of this compilation, not to mention the fact that all of it is copyright-free and may be reproduced at will, makes this a very useful book for Keepers.

Because of its historic sources, the book is an invaluable collection of illustrations for the real and notional occult tomes that are part of the *Call of Cthulhu* milieu.

Indeed, some of the actual source tomes from which this collection are drawn are clearly on a par with those that have appeared in CoC scenarios (e.g., the 15th century *La vie de L'Antechrist* or the 16th century *Imagines Mortis*). Thus, in addition to being a source of illustrations for tomes already in play, *Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft* is a source of information and inspiration for other tomes. Furthermore, several of the illustrations are frontispieces or pages from books, and make especially effective game aids.

Beyond being a source of artwork for tomes, of course, the illustrations can be used by Keepers to help describe the horrors that investigators witness, dream or hallucinate about, or depictions they find etched on the walls, doors, and floors of tombs, ancient cities, and dungeons.

All of the illustrations include descriptions of what is being shown and are labeled with their source, often including the artist's name. This is especially useful to Keepers with an eye toward authenticity. For example, if you need a picture from a 15th century source, this makes it very easy to find something appropriate.

This book is part of Dover's *Pictorial Archive* series. That means all of the illustrations in it are copyright-free, and can be reproduced without special permission. And, as they are clean black-and-white line drawings, this is easy to do. Thus, the illustrations can be used for game aids, newsletters, fanzines, tasteless greeting cards, etc.

Picture Book of Devils, Demons and Witchcraft is a thoroughly useful work at a meager price and causes a full 10 phobias.

Revelation X, the "Bob" Apocryphon
Religious Satire
Translated by The Subgenius Foundation
Edited by Rev. Ivan Stang with St. Paul Mavrides
Fireside/Simon & Schuster, $14.95
reviewed by Thomas A. Head

This book is a Keeper's dream come true. A non-gaming tome that has more useful ideas and information than many a game-specific book. Anyone running a *Cthulhu Now* or *Delta Green* campaign and jonesing for something new, weird, frightening, and modern, would be doing themselves a disservice by not grabbing this book. Yes clutch this book to your sunken chest and take sup on the forbidden lore within!

Imagine that the world is not as you think. Imagine that a horrible, deeply hidden CONSPIRACY consisting of power-mad money-hungry Slack-stealing humans and brain-sucking soul-stealing cattle-mutilating aliens not only exists, but has been in control of the Earth for thousands of years. It has taken various forms throughout the ages, but has always used its power to keep the normals in line: the line to the slaughterhouse! Sound familiar? Now imagine that the only way to reveal this information to the masses, to keep it from being compromised or suppressed outright, was to put it in the form of a joke/satire book that everyone would laugh at, but no one would really take seriously—until it was much, much too late. YEA! Praise "Bob" in His infinite wisdom!

Well, it may be too late to save the human race (no big loss there), but *Revelation X* works hard to make the coming apocalypse an interesting time for the rest of us. Its general overtones of dread and paranoia instill a feeling quite Lovecraftian, but Chapter 9, "Gods,Monsters, and UFO's," with its Elder Gods, Space Aliens, and World-Wide Destruction, is so much in the style of the old man one can only believe that the Ancient Yeti Masters had a hand in it. Oh the Ancient Yeti Masters of Mutantis in Antiquitum! I see them now as they reanimate Lovecraft's shriveled bones, shackle them to a typewriter, and not return them to sleep eternal until the completion of the chapter! Woe unto he who would cross the path of the Ancient Yeti Masters!

Revelation X (like its predecessor, *The Book of the Subgenius*) contains in-depth chapters on THE CONSPIRACY, the complete history of the Subgenii's Yeti heritage, the threat of the "nice" aliens (the Greys), the coming visit of the X-ists and the Great Rupture, the Awakening of the Elder Gods, and of course, the Church of the Subgenius's chief saviour/salesman J.R. "Bob" Dobbs. Where it differs from the first book is in the level and tone of information: much deeper, and much darker. Beware the secrets that mortal man know not the keening therein! Huh? Oh yeah, praise "Bob," yada, yada, yada.

The uses of this book are myriad: as an off-kilter campaign setting in the present, or a few years from now when things are a lot worse, or just after July 5th, 1998, 7 AM, the assigned pick-up time by the X-ists of all card-carrying members of The Church of the Subgenius (for info send $1 and SASE to: The Subgenius Foundation, P.O. Box 140306, Dallas, TX 75214). All time periods are described in great detail in Chapter 11, "History of the Future"; the post-Slack Earth is especially horrifying. Another use of this terrifying text is a source for new creatures: the Deros (or "The Advanced Supersonic Aluminum Nazi Hell Creatures from the Hollow Earth"), the Greys (who traded advanced technologies [like 8-track tape players] for human guinea pigs), the Yeti (original species of Earth, and forefathers of all Subgenii), as well as the Pinks and Normals (who would keep the world at their mediocratic level and destroy any who try to rise above it). But beware the mindless fanboy idolatry of the Bobbies, for the light of fanaticism doth burn brightest in their eyes, blinding them to the idiocy of their actions.

Which leads me to the concept of using the Church itself as a cult for the investigators to fight in an ongoing campaign. Imagine your players coming across a strange new cult of poorly organized but wildly enthusiastic (read: insanely dangerous) members, who perform acts and deeds that go against all of the players' sacredly held beliefs and morals (or at least the things that THE CONSPIRACY has duped them into believing as sacred and morally right). Imagine your players fighting cults of Bobbies, Dobbsheads, Overmen and Overwomen, Yeti Masters, and so on, and slowly coming to the realization that they are all one and the same (I strongly recommend the use of actual Church documents as mysterious manuscripts and forbidden tomes, all available through the above address). Finally, imagine the sanity losses as the investigators discover, to their horror, that the kooks and weirdos they've been ruthlessly slaughtering all along are the only ones capable of and willing to thwart the evil plans of the great CONSPIRACY and its minions.

What Fun!

Revelation X is an interesting read from beginning to end, it has a good beat, and you can dance to it. I give it ten out of ten phobias. And that's not just because I've been excommunicated from the Church and am now trying to get back in before July 5th, 1998 rolls around! No way! I'd still give it 10 out of 10 because the book deserves no less! Aw, hell—why take my word for it, go buy the book and judge it for yourself. (The ways of the Church are subtle, no?)

Cthulhu: The Mythos and Kindred Horrors
a collection of Robert E. Howard's horror fiction
by Robert E. Howard, edited by David Drake
Baen Books, $4.99
reviewed by C.L. Werner

Back in print as a Baen Fantasy paperback is this classic anthology of some of the best horror stories written by Robert E. Howard. Among these stories are most of Howard's Mythos tales (only the obscure and mediocre "Usurp the Night" appears to be missing; it appears under the title "The Hoofed Thing" in *Trails in Darkness*, also reviewed in this issue). Readers tired of the sometimes psychedelic and poorly written tales which seem to infest the collections being produced these days should allow themselves the pleasure of rereading these spine-tinglers by one of the grand masters. And, if Robert E. Howard is merely the creator of Conan to you, then procuring this book is an absolute must.

Mythos tales in this volume include the poem "Arkham," the Mythos version of "The Fire of Asshurbanipal," "The Thing on the Roof," and the classic Mythos tale "The Black Stone." "Dig Me No Grave" is the best of the Mythos stories, a tale of sorcerers and time travel worthy of Lovecraft himself and a curiously restrained piece from the bloody pen of Conan's father.

Other masterful tales are also present including two classics which, depending on your definition of the Mythos, may or may not be considered as such.

"The Valley of the Worm" is the best of Howard's James Allison stories, a series of tales in which a crippled modern man is able to recount the bloody deeds of his past lives. This time he tells of an Aryan barbarian named Niord whose people conquer a race of Picts and settle near the pre-human ruins which are the lair of a mammoth slug-like horror known only as the Worm. When this behemoth appears, it is with a true Lovecraftian flair.

The other classic is the Bran Mak Morn tale "Worms of the Earth" and features Howard's serpen-

tine variant of Arthur Machen's Little People. In the story, the King of the Picts seeks vengeance upon a Roman governor and enlists his race's ancient enemies in his cause, only to regret his decision; this is one of Howard's best stories.

Other works featured are the poems "An Open Window" and "Silence Falls on Mecca's Walls," "The Shadow of the Beast," "Old Garfield's Heart," "Pigeons From Hell," and "The People of the Dark," another tale of Howard's reptilian Little People. These latter tales have little or nothing to do with the literature of cosmic fear but are good reads all the same.

Cthulhu is chock-full of classic stories of pulp-era horror, a must-have for any student of the Mythos. *Cthulhu* garners 9.5 phobias.

Ex Libris Miskatonici
A Catalogue of Selected Items from the Special Collections in the Miskatonic University Library
by Joan C. Stanley
Necronomicon Press, $7.95
reviewed by Brian M. Sammons

Being the Keeper of a *Call of Cthulhu* game can sometimes be a hard, demanding, and unappreciated job. First, you think up a good, solid story for the background of your latest adventure into the wonderful town of Arkham. Then you carefully create realistic and believable NPCs for the party to converse with. Finally, after reading the scenario over and over to make sure everything is just right, what is the first thing uttered out of the collective player's mouths when you mention Arkham? "Cool, Miskatonic University! Let's all search the library for books!" It seems that, no mater what, as soon as you introduce the illustrious Miskatonic Library to a group of investigators, they will want to know anything and everything about it. How big is it, how old is it, the history of it, and most of all: "Exactly what books do they have in there?" Sadly, most of the time even a well-read and well-prepared Keeper could not give an answer to that last question. Information on the contents of the library has for some time been hard to come by. Well, now there is a way to find all the information on the library's collection of forbidden books that you need, and if you're so willing, you can finally answer some of those questions for the investigators.

The fine folks at Necronomicon Press have put together a small gem of a book called *Ex Libris Miskatonici*, written by "university librarian" Joan C. Stanley. This book is from a small press, and it shows, so if you rated the book on its looks alone the grade would not be very high. The cover is thin yellow cardstock that, to me, resembles the construction paper I used in grade school. The binding is nothing more than two staples, but that is sufficient to hold the mere 66 pages of the book together. In the book's aesthetic defense, the pages are oversized so they do hold more information then the common paperback page, and the printing is very clean and neat. But now that I have told you about the appearance of the book, please put that aside—and remember what a wise man once said about judging a book by its cover. Although you might easily pass up this book due to its appearance, you would also be missing out on a wealth of great information.

Within the pages of *Ex Libris Miskatonici* there is a extensive history of the library from its founding to the modern day. There is also information on the endowments that gave the university its disturbing books, as well as the museums that house their more unusual exhibits. The book then describes, in great detail, the library's three major collections of Mythos tomes. These collections are "The Stone Library," "The Department of Eastern Antiquities," and "The Darby Collection." The contents and history of each collection is conveyed with a sense of first-hand familiarity that makes the read all the more enjoyable and believable.

Information is abundant on many mysterious books. To name only a few of the titles covered, there are: *The Pnakotic Manuscripts*, *The G 'harne* and *Sussex Fragments*, *The Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*, *The R 'lyeh Text*, *Codex Dagonensis*, *Les Cultes des Goules*, *De Vermiis Mysteriis*, *Die Unausprechlichen Kulten*, and of course the rarer-than-rare *Necronomicon*. Details of each book include a history of its creation and of its author, if the author is known. *Ex Libris Miskatonici* also tells the story of each tome's travels before it was acquired by the university, and how the library came to obtain each one. There is also information on two non-Mythos works: *The Voynich Manuscript* and *Praesidia Finium* or *Frontier Garrison*.

Ex Libris Miskatonici is must-have reading for every would-be author who ever wanted to pen a Cthulhu Mythos story, or have a scenario published that deals with the Miskatonic library or any of the tomes profiles herein. The information on the library is solid, and its forbidden books are dealt with in an informative and believable manner. This little book is also strongly recommend for those Keepers who wish to bone up on their knowledge of one of the most interesting aspects of the Mythos. After all, what's *Call of Cthulhu* without dreaded books of mind-numbing horror? I give *Ex Libris Miskatonici* a well deserved 8.5 phobias.

Trails in Darkness

horror stories west of the Pecos
by Robert E. Howard
Baen Books, $5.99
reviewed by C.L. Werner

The sixth in a seven-volume collection of Howard's non-Conan fantasy stories, *Trails in Darkness* offers a collection of atmospheric, two-fisted horror stories in the blood-and-brains style of *Weird Tales*' gory-handed prince. Sadly, as with the previous volume in this series (*Eons of the Night*), introductions to the stories are written by S.M. Stirling, apparently a politically correct pod-person whose opinion of Howard comes across as 'a racist barbarian' and he is constantly apologizing for Howard's "unfeeling, mean-spirited" treatments of foreign elements in his stories.

Still, these stories are grand rip-snorters. "The Dead Remember," about vengeance from the grave in the Old West, was Howard's one entry into the slicks and is a very atmospheric tale. "Black Canaan" details a revolt by blacks against their white neighbors after a ju-ju man stirs them up in a remote region of Texas. "Kelly the Conjure-Man" is a short which reads like a genuine folk story. "The Man on the Ground" is a weak story about revenge in the Old West. "Black Hound of Death" is a wonderful pulp story about evil monks from the Orient, a twisted madman, and an escaped black murderer. "'For the Love of Barbara Allen'" is a poor story about time travel. "Moon of Zambebwei" shares the elements of black revolt present in "Black Canaan" but adds a carnivorous gray ape (from various Conan stories) and a malicious octoroon conjure-man. "The Horror from the Mound" is one Howard's best—a tale of a vampire loose in the scorched plains of Texas.

Two Mythos stories are also present. "The Hoofed Thing" is a retitling of "Usurp the Night." Not a very good story, with Howard's sword-wielding protagonist being dreadfully out-of-place in a "modern" setting, and a suburban one at that. "The Valley of the Lost" is a retitling of "Secret of Lost Valley." This tale brings Howard's Little People from "People of the Dark" and "Worms of the Earth" to the Old West, with feuding Texans discovering their inhuman neighbors. Its ending is especially chilling when one recalls the horrible way that the tale's author died.

All in all, *Trails in Darkness* is a strong book, but of only marginal interest to the Mythos reader. *Trails in Darkness* rates 8 phobias, but only 2 if you are only interested in the Mythos stories.

***Scream for Jeeves*—A Parody**
Lovecraft/Wodehouse parody
by Peter H. Cannon
Necronomicon Press, $7.50
reviewed by Daniel Harms

> "When my tale, 'The Attic Window,' appeared in the January, 1922 issue of *Whispers*, in a good many places it was taken off the stands at the complaints of silly milksops."
>
> "I had a piece, 'What the Well-dressed Young Man is Wearing,' in *Milady's Boudoir*, my Aunt Dahlia's magazine," I replied, not to be outdone…

P.G. Wodehouse (1881–1975) was one of England's most popular humor writers. Though he wrote many novels and short stories in a British setting, his most famous character is Bertie Wooster, a foolish aristocrat who is constantly getting into all sorts of trouble with his friends and aunts only to escape through the intervention of his loyal butler Jeeves. I could never get into the stories, but I loved how the television show *Masterpiece Theater* brought them to life in all their genteel wackiness.

So, what does this have to do with Lovecraft? Nothing—which is what makes Peter Cannon's *Scream for Jeeves* so wonderful. Each of the stories in the collection is a retelling of one or more of Lovecraft's tales from the viewpoint of Bertie Wooster, who injects an element of absurdity into even the most horrific events. The first tale, "Cats, Rats, and Bertie Wooster," takes the duo to Exham Priory to help Wooster's old friend Norrys cheer up his friend De La Poer. Though the story may rely too much upon playing Lovecraft quotes against Bertie's comments, its conclusion is chillingly funny nonetheless. Following these horrifying events, Wooster travels to New York for "Something Foetid," during which he meets Randolph Carter and a doctor with an air-conditioning obsession—and develops a rather nasty cold. Next, in "The Rummy Affair of Young Charlie," Aunt Agatha sends Wooster and Jeeves to Paris to keep an eye on a young American scholar who has developed an unusual friendship with a mute violinist. Our heroes find this task so difficult that they are forced to enlist the aid of a Mr. Altamont of Chicago (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle afficianados take note). The book is rounded out with an essay on Lovecraft, Wooster, and Doyle which wasn't necessarily entertaining but after the three stories I really didn't mind.

Mythos parody has been a rare thing, and most examples I've read—though funny at times—have all relied on the same jokes for their effect. I sometimes become annoyed with them because the author often

puts himself or herself above the story and takes on a somewhat snide tone toward the other author's works. Though this story does sometimes Lovecraft's stories in a manner to make them look ridiculous, it's hard to take umbrage when the replies to them are made by the silly and incompetent Bertie Wooster. Cannon's stories, instead of displaying the author's perceived superiority over the original subject matter, shows his love for both writers' stories and blends them together in a hilarious and wonderful way. Cannon has decided to wait for the Wodehouse estate's permission for his next set of Wooster tales; hopefully that institution will recognize a good thing when they see it. This book gets 7 to 7.5 phobias for Lovecraft fans. If you're familiar with both Lovecraft and Wodehouse, it rises to a 10; the passage where Jeeves comments, "Most eldritch, sir," is more than worth it.

The Dunwich Cycle
a collection of Yog-Sothothery
edited by Robert M. Price
Chaosium, $10.95
reviewed by C.L. Werner

The Dunwich Cycle is a well-rounded collection which examines Arthur Machen's influence upon "The Dunwich Horror" and, in turn, "The Dunwich Horror"'s influence upon other authors. As both a story of "The Dunwich Horror"'s legacy and as an entertaining collection of horror stories, *The Dunwich Cycle* succeeds admirably.

Robert M. Price begins the anthology with two Machen stories—the classic "The Great God Pan" and the less-noteworthy "The White People." While "The Novel of the Black Seal" is a Machen tale also of considerable influence upon Lovecraft, it appeared earlier in *The Hastur Cycle*. While "The Great God Pan" is a sledgehammer horror story sure to invoke nightmares, "The White People" is simply a nightmare to read. It has been said that Machen's genius in the field of horror is often overlooked because of the number of miserable tales he wrote for every masterpiece he produced. While writing classics like "The Great God Pan" and *The Three Imposters*, he also wrote abysmal dreck such as "The White People," a story with a promising prologue and a feeble attempt to deliver on that promise.

Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror" appears out of a sense of completeness, though any Mythos fan will have read it many times already. August Derleth's "The Shuttered Room" is also included, marking one of Derleth's more competent Lovecraft pastiches. Robert M. Price contributes his rewrite of the third part of Derleth's *The Lurker at the Threshold*, "The Round Tower," and his very well-written sequel to "The Dunwich Horror," "Wilbur Whateley Waiting," delivering a very convincing treatment of the title character. While "The Round Tower" is only as competent as Derleth's writing (though better than the material Price rewrote), the handling of Wilbur Whateley in the latter tale may actually be an improvement on Lovecraft—though other aspects of the story are less inspired.

"The Devil's Hop Yard" is a marginal tale of Dunwich by Richard A. Lupoff while Ben Indick's "The Road to Dunwich" is a haunting tale of the lingering evil left behind by Wizard and Wilbur Whateley, one whose sense of despair and loss is sure to impress the reader. Less impressive is the W.H. Pugmire/Robert M. Price tale of the Whateley triplets, "The Tree House."

The sole clunker in the book is C.J. Henderson's ineffective, unatmospheric "You Can't Take It With You," another of his Sam Spade vs. the Mythos stories which is even less competent than previous tales of his written in this manner. In fact, Henderson's story has more to do with Innsmouth than Dunwich.

The Dunwich Cycle is a volume worth buying. Once again the cover art is by Harry Fassl and is easily as ghastly as that of *Goatswood*. Interior illustrations by Earl Geier round out the volume. A well-rounded book, *The Dunwich Cycle* suffers only from the necessary evil that its two masterpieces are tales which most readers will already possess in other collections. Still, the rest of the book is worth reading and as such *Dunwich* is worth 7 of 10 phobias.

Made In Goatswood
New tales of the Severn Valley
Edited by Scott David Aniolowski
Chaosium, Inc. $10.95
reviewed by C.L. Werner

Made In Goatswood is the eighth in Chaosium's *Cthulhu Cycle*. Although I should not need to say this, Chaosium has done quite a bit to change the visual appeal of their fiction anthologies. For starters, the cover of this book is by H.E. Fassl and it is a definite improvement over what has come before, being creepy and atmospheric rather than merely decorative. The cover art is no longer limited to a small box floating amidst a jumble of authors and information but is instead allowed to dominate, as it should. Less understandable is Chaosium's decision to craft a green-backed rather than white-backed cover, making it easy to pass over as a *Cycle* book. Unlike the previous non-white book, *The Encyclopedia*

Cthulhuiana, *Goatswoon* lacks even the distinctive numerical denotation upon its spine, making it doubly difficult to spot on the shelves.

As for the meat, Scott Aniolowski has cobbled together a very entertaining volume, one which far outshines lesser efforts like *Cthulhu's Heirs* and the *Azathoth Cycle*. In fact, I should say that *Goatswood* is overall a better book than Arkham House's *Cthulhu 2000* (also reviewed in this issue). While *Goatswood* does not rise to the heights of perfection present in the latter anthology, neither do any of its stories fail so miserably.

Goatswood contains many fine stories. One of the best is Aniolowski's own tale, a nasty piece dealing with a technophobe's worst nightmare. While hardly a Mythos tale, it is certainly a ghastly piece. Other excellent stories are offered by famed *Call of Cthulhu* guru Keith Herber with a haunting tale of fortune-telling and J. Todd Kingrea's "Cross My Heart, Hope to Die" with its brutal portrayal of children in the thrall of Eihort. Michael Szymanski gives us a marvelous "modern pulp" story, something worthy of Robert E. Howard. Diane Sammarco's "The Queen" conjures shades of Machen's "The Great God Pan" with Shuggs in place of satyrs. Donald R. Burleson's "Ghost Lake" is another fine story with a remarkable British ghost story feel.

Sadly, *Goatswood* does have its clunkers. The New Age gobbledy-gook tale "A Priestess of Nodens" by A.A. Attanasio is certainly the worst story in the volume, though Penelope Love's confusing "Unseen" is close behind. Kevin A. Ross, *Call of Cthulhu*'s mad genius, delivers the most disappointing story in the book, one which succeeds in capturing the reader's interest and then cheats it with an abrupt and unsatisfactory ending.

Made in Goatswood concludes with a new Mythos tale by Ramsey Campbell—"The Horror Under Warrendown." The tale is, on the surface, a standard Mythos story but with very little effort the reader will see that it is all in fun, something of a good-natured jest. Perhaps Mr. Campbell penned the piece during Easter.

Made in Goatswood is a good addition to the library of a reader already familiar with the Mythos, though it does not rise to the level of being mainstream horror. Still, *Goatswood* is intended for the Cthulhu subculture and as such it succeeds immensely. *Goatswood* gets 7 of 10 phobais and my hopes that Mr. Aniolowski will hold any future anthologies up to the level of *Goatswood*.

The Trail of Cthulhu
a book to keep the flame alive
by August Derleth

Carrol & Graf, $4.95
reviewed by C.L. Werner

Back in print as a paperback is this classic collection of Derlethian Mythos stories woven together in a loose novel. While nowhere near the caliber of Lovecraft or even Bloch, these tales by August Derleth are surprisingly entertaining and one, "The Black Island," is noteworthy for being truer to the generally pessimistic and oppressive tone of the Cthulhu Mythos than such "classics" as Brian Lumley's *The Burrower's Beneath*.

The Trail of Cthulhu concerns Professor Laban Shrewsbury's efforts to destroy the cult of Cthulhu and the grim god of R'lyeh himself. The novel begins with "The House on Curwen Street" which originally appeared as "The Trail of Cthulhu" in a 1944 issue of *Weird Tales*. In this average Mythos tale, Professor Shrewsbury engages Andrew Phelan to serve as his secretary/bodyguard. With the assistance of some Space Mead and Hastur's Byakhee, these men attempt to destroy a cult stronghold near Machu Picchu and then R'lyeh itself. These attempts fail and the men flee to the library at Celaeno to escape Cthulhu's minions.

The second part is "The Watcher from the Sky," from the July 1945 *Weird Tales*, and begins with Andrew Phelan's return from Celaeno. He attempts to dispose of the new leader of Innsmouth's Esoteric Order of Dagon but fails, being forced to take theological student Abel Keane into his confidence and disguise themselves as Innsmouthers to make a second attempt on the life of Ahab Marsh. Again, a mediocre Mythos tale.

"The Gorge Beyond Salapunco," which appeared in *Weird Tales* in 1949 as "The Testament of Claiborne Boyd" is probably the worst of the lot, detailing a very Professor Angell-like catalog of cult activities collected by Boyd's murdered uncle and Claiborne Boyd's journey to Peru under the influence of an astral Professor Shrewsbury to finish off the cult stronghold under Machu Picchu.

The fourth portion of the volume is "The Keeper of the Key" from *Weird Tales* of May 1951. In this story, Professor Shrewsbury and Nayland Colum journey to the Nameless City, commune with the shade of Abdul Alhazred, and rescue a copy of *Al Azif* from the mad Arab's grave. Altogether, an average Mythos tale with nice imagery but no real horror.

The final portion of the book is "The Black Island," from a 1952 issue of *Weird Tales*. This time, Professor Shrewsbury and all of the other stories' narrators join forces with "The Black Island"'s narrator, archæologist Horvath Blayne to pinpoint R'lyeh's location in the Pacific and destroy it with the assistance of the U.S.

Navy. They find R'lyeh and succeed in pissing off Great Cthulhu as he leaves his tomb before escaping and having an airplane drop an H-Bomb on the island. Shrewsbury assumes Cthulhu to be destroyed, but Blayne knows better. Blayne's real name is Horvath Waite and he is a Deep One hybrid. He can "feel" that Cthulhu is fine and sleeping again. With Shrewsbury's confederates sure of their victory, they do not escape to the safety of Celaeno and, thus, remain where Cthulhu's minions can get at them—a shockingly different ending from *Trail of Cthulhu*'s other stores.

Trail of Cthulhu is a bad novel but a good collection of short stories. Read as separate tales, one can excuse the necessary repetition of certain background information on Cthulhu from one tale to the next. The slightly optimistic endings along the way are bothersome but make "The Black Island"'s ending all the more horrible and shocking.

The influence of *Trail of Cthulhu* has had in shaping *Call of Cthulhu* is immediately apparent. *Call of Cthulhu* has employed this book as its foundation every bit as much as *The Dunwich Horror and Others*. As such, readers should be encouraged to explore Derleth's cycle of stories. While not Lovecraft, Derleth's stories are much better than a great deal of the new Cthulhu fiction being turned out these days. As both a vital piece of *Call of Cthulhu*'s foundation and as a somewhat enjoyable collection of stories, *The Trail of Cthulhu* ranks 7 phobias.

Cthulhu 2000
Mythos fiction anthology
Edited by Jim Turner
Arkham House, $24.95
reviewed by C.L. Werner

A new Mythos anthology from Arkham House! Mana from Heaven for the Cthulhu-head—or so it should be. While *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, Arkham House's last foray into new Cthulhu fiction back in 1980, was the sort of book that fans drool over, *Cthulhu 2000* is a far cry from it, being little better than a Chaosium *Cthulhu Cycle* book with a huge price tag and its best stories taken from the aforementioned *New Tales*.

Right from the start, *Cthulhu 2000* rapidly begins to refute the fan's expectations of a notable volume. The cover is a poor image of Cthulhu crouched upon a mountaintop with two moons in the background. As has been pointed out to me, it looks like a salvaged fantasy painting with the dragon altered to become Mighty Cthulhu. As if the horrid title *Cthulhu 2000* had not already set alarm bells ringing, the cover art certainly causes one to wonder if this is indeed an Arkham House book. Sadly, it is.

Three excellent stories are taken from *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*—T.E.D. Klein's masterpiece "Black Man With a Horn," Ramsey Campbell's "Faces at the Pine Dunes" and the enigmatic sci-fi tale "Shaft Number 247" by Basil Copper. These stories are strategically placed throughout the book to lessen the impact of an alarming number of clunkers and abortions.

Joanna Russ gives us the stupid "I Had Vacantly Crumpled it into My Pocket, But by God Elliot it was a Picture From Life," one of the worst stories I have ever read. Poppy Z. Brite offers the offensive "His Mouth will Taste of Wormwood," basically a modern homosexual retelling of Lovecraft's "The Hound," a textbook example of not only bad taste but outright plagiarism. Other stories which fail are Lawrence Watt-Evans' "Pickman's Modem" and Bruce Sterling's all-around insipid "The Unthinkable" with its Cold War fought with magic nonsense. Gene Wolfe's "Lord of the Land" is a good creepy tale until we come to the last couple of "I've got to wrap this up" pages.

There are also good stories as well. "The Barrens" by F. Paul Wilson and "The Last Feast of Harlequin" by Thomas Ligotti are both noteworthy Mythos tales. Michael Shea's excellent "Fat Face" furthers Lovecraft's hint at the rapid evolution of the shoggoths in a nightmarish tale. Gahan Wilson's "HPL" is a kindly take on two premises: what if Lovecraft had lived to a ripe old age and what if the Mythos was real. "The Big Fish" by Kim Newman is splendidly pulpy tale with a Sam Spade clone and Deep Ones in wartime Los Angeles.

Overall, *Cthulhu 2000*is an uneven volume which leaves one questioning Arkham House's quality control and editor Jim Turner's taste. Still, at least half the volume is worth reading and a quarter more is at least palatable. At $24.95 however, Arkham House has not produced a book worth the price. Either their quality must increase or their cost decrease if Arkham House expects to capture Chaosium's market.

Cthulhu 2000 rates 6 of 10 phobias, as bad stories and a high price is the worst combination I can imagine. If, however, the reader does not have a collection with the three outstanding reprints, I would rate it 8 of 10, especially if the reader has not before encountered "Black Man With a Horn." Still, that story is readily availble in the paperback T.E.D. Klein collection *Dark Gods*.

Miskatonic University
paperback anthology of Mythos fiction

edited by Martin H. Greenberg and Robert Weinberg
Daw Books, Inc. $5.99
reviewed by Brian M. Sammons

Recently I was perusing the shelves of a large, modern book store, searching in vain through the woefully inept horror section, when I happened to spot a title that took me quite by surprise: *Miskatonic University*. It was a small paperback that had cool cover art, promised thirteen original stories about good old M.U., and cost under ten bucks! I thought I had made a great purchase when I walked out of that store, for what more could any fan of HPL and his haunted little town of Arkham want?

Well for starters, how about good stories? From the first story by Tina L. Jens called "Kali Yuga Comes" (that's right, the four-armed Tibetan demon-goddess) to Benjamin Adams' "Second Movement" (which is more like an episode of *Quantum Leap* than a Mythos story), the tales are neither frightening nor chilling and more often then not have nothing to do with Lovecraft, Cthulhu, or anything so-related. Examples of this are the two stories above, as well as many others; where aspects of the Mythos are used very sparsely and then promptly forgotten, present only for the sake of having some feeble link to Lovecraft's work. If I wrote a story about Jason, the killer from the *Friday the 13th* films, and had him carry around a copy of *De Vermiis Mysteriis* in his back pocket, then I'm sure it could have been published in this book, too.

Then there is the matter of the title of the book. In most of the stories, the location of Miskatonic University is tacked on and neither relates nor contributes to the story in any way. The authors could have easily used any university, such as Brown, Yale, Oxford, or countless others. For that matter, some stories have no link to any school at all and could have easily been placed anywhere. Miskatonic's long history, rich background, and shadowy and unspoken past are all but ignored by most in this book.

That is not to say the collection is completely bad, for there are a few good stories hidden within. Mort Castle's "Teachers" is not a horror story, but is a well-written and thoughtful homage to one of the field's greatest writers. "Her Misbegotten Son" by Alan Rodgers shows promise and has two of Lovecraft's best characters: Keziah Mason and the Black Man. But the author's use of these characters, and the end of the story, leave a little to be desired. Will Murray's "The Sothis Radiant," is an interesting tale of cosmic horror, great destruction, and the unrest of seething nuclear chaos. Perhaps the best story is Brian McNaughton's "Ghoulmaster," that deals with...well...ghouls. His use of the subterranean cannibalistic creatures and his description of the hero's fearful passage through the underground tunnels is very Lovecraftian.

Miskatonic University is not a terrible book, but you should know what to expect before you buy it. The book does have some good stories, some that are okay, and others that are just bad. Some of the stories deal with the Mythos and Miskatonic University in a meaningful way, but most don't. All in all, if you are looking for a good book about Lovcraft's venerable institution of arcane learning, look somewhere else. But six bucks is not too much to ask for four good stories (and a few okay ones), and for that reason alone I give *Miskatonic University* 4 phobias.

Lovecraft's Legacy
tributes to the master
edited by Robert E. Weinberg
and Martin H. Greenberg
TOR Books, $13.95
reviewed by C.L. Werner

It seems that everyone is jumping on the HPL/Cthulhu Mythos bandwagon these days. Perhaps Chaosium can be thanked—or blamed, according to your temperament—for this. Whatever the reason, we are seeing a virtual flood of Cthulhu stories from Arkham House, Carol & Graf, and even Baen Books. 1997 may very well be the year of Cthulhu. The stars are right...

TOR's offering is a trade paperback reprinting of 1990's *Lovecraft's Legacy*, compiled by master anthologists Robert Weinberg and Martin Greenberg, the men who have produced such wonderful pulp anthologies as *Weird Vampire Tales*, *100 Wild Little Weird Tales*, and *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*. Surely men with such a background will produce such a wonderful book as to prove a worthy tribute to the Old Man from Providence.

The cover's nice.

Mort Castle's "A Secret of the Heart" is a mediocre story, a sort of prequel to Edgar Allen Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart." Its inclusion is questionable. Yes, Lovecraft did borrow from Poe, but never did he write something which is nothing more than pastiche. Not the best of beginnings for this book.

"Noted" horror writer Brian Lumley presents what he considers similar to Lovecraft's "The Colour Out of Space"—a tale called "Big C." Even this atrocity's author admits that he didn't have the "time" to write something for this tribute anthology. "Big C," about a malevolent, intelligent, Florida-sized cancer is tablescraps from Lumley's "The Man Who Felt Pain."

Given the chance to pay back in the smallest way the man whose work he aped in his early career, Brian Lumley instead offers insult.

Sadly, there are other terrible stories, such as "The Other Man" by Ray Garton (about New Age astral projection) and "From the Pages of Helmut Hecker" by Chet Williamson (a goose-stepping Nazi sadist German horror author takes in a cat which is the reincarnation of HPL). "Soul Keeper" by Joseph A. Citro is an inept story about a man being tormented by a crazy old coot who keeps him prisoner in his house.

There are a few good finds. Hugh B. Cave's tale of Haiti and voodoo, "The Blade and the Claw," while not a Henry S. Whitehead story, is at least competent. "Ugly" by Gary Brandner is a charming tale about a hen-pecked cuckold and his lizard.

Then there are the Mythos stories. F. Paul Wilson's masterful "The Barrens." Gahan Wilson's touching "H.P.L." Gene Wolfe's uneven "Lord of the Land." (All three of these tales have just recently been reprinted in Arkham House's *Cthulhu 2000*.) "Will" by Graham Masterson is a mediocre story about William Shakespeare and Yog-Sothoth. "Meryphillia" by Brian McNaughton is another mediocre tale about ghouls set in the Dreamlands. Ed Gorman's "The Order of Things Unknown" (which is the title of an excellent episode of the old television show *The Outer Limits*, incidentally) is a story about serial killers under the thrall of Old One-sent dreams and borders upon being a waste of time.

Each tale includes a brief statement from the author in which he explains Lovecraft's effect upon him and career. Some of these are touching, others infuriating (such as Lumley's comments). The book opens with a letter from Robert Bloch to the spectre of Lovecraft. Reading it, one feels that one shouldn't be, for there is quite a bit of emotion involved. And it is sobering to think that Robert Bloch is no longer with us. I hope that somehow he has found his old friend in the next world.

All in all, *Lovecraft's Legacy* should be avoided by the budget-minded reader. *Cthulhu 2000* will give more bang for the buck and includes this collection's two best stories, to boot. "Ugly" is worth reading but not enough to justify this purchase. An excellent cover does not make an excellent book—3 phobias.

The Mask of Cthulhu
a collection of Derlethian horror
by August Derleth
Carrol & Graf, $4.95
reviewed by C.L. Werner

There is no contest between *The Trail of Cthulhu* and *The Mask of Cthulhu*—*Trail* is the better book by a long shot. Originally published in 1958 by Arkham House, this book collects many of August Derleth's *Weird Tales* Mythos stories together with one original tale, "The Seal of R'lyeh."

The collection opens with "The Return of Hastur," a tale readers may have seen recently in *The Hastur Cycle*. It is utter dreck with Hastur attempting to possess a man whose uncle agreed to serve as the host of He Who Shall Not Be Named in exchange for a copy of the *R'lyeh Text*. From there it devolves into a bunch of nonsense with Cthulhu and his minions living in water-filled caverns beneath the man's house and the Elder Gods making a brief "here we come to save the day" appearance. "The Whippoorwills in the Hills" is another rotten story which is little more than a poor man's "The Dunwich Horror." This same story is basically repeated later on as "The House in the Valley" with Cthulhu and the Deep Ones taking the role of Yog-Sothoth in the latter tale. "The Sandwin Compact" is an unhorrifying story about a Deep One hybrid trying to break his pact with Cthulhu and Ithaqua. "The Seal of R'lyeh" involves a young man who discovers his tainted heritage in dark Innsmouth and takes up his deceased uncle's search for R'lyeh and Cthulhu, the story being average at best.

The collection's one high point is "Something in Wood" which explores the dream visions sent by Cthulhu to artistic minds, in this case an art critic who purchases a wooden carving of Great Cthulhu. It is quite a good story, especially in the midst of such abysmal trash and does not suffer the overuse of the Mythos which spells doom for Derleth's other stories.

The Mask of Cthulhu is not a very good book by any standard except from the view of nostalgia. These are, after all, among the first post-Lovecraft Mythos stories. Still, nostalgia cannot patch the flaws in this book. 2 phobias.

GURPS Illuminati
by Nigel D. Findley
Steve Jackson Games, $17.95
reviewed by Adam Scott Glancy

Both *Secret Societies* and *Hidden Invasion* (also reviewed in this issue) owe a great deal to Nigel D. Findley, the late and lamented author who brought us *GURPS Illuminati* back in 1992. Both of their bibliographies seem to borrow heavily from Findley's monumental feat of coalescing all the lunatic-fringe political ranting he used to create the background material in *GURPS Illuminati*. For his part, Kenneth Hite's bibli-

ography in *Secret Societies* praises Findley's *GURPS Illuminati* as an excellent source. He's not kidding.

GURPS Illuminati has a great deal to offer a *Call of Cthulhu* Keeper, even if that Keeper owns *Secret Societies* and *Hidden Invasion*. The material in the Illuminated Groups section of Findley's book is more historically-accurate than what is presented in *Secret Societies*, with its slant towards the *Nephilim* role-playing universe. *Hidden Invasion* does a better job than *Gurps Illuminati* when it comes to covering the newly-emerging conspiracy theories surrounding the UFO phenomena, but *GURPS Illuminati* still provides that claustrophobic feeling of isolation and paranoia that *Hidden Invasion* fails to deliver. Plus there's a black-humor edge to *GURPS Illuminati* that is lacking from the equally-earnest *Secret Societies* and *Hidden Invasion*.

All the old favorite conspirators are here: The Bavarian Illuminati (again), the Cathars, the Knight's Templar, the Islamic Society of Assassins, the inexplicable alien Alphans, the Prieure de Sion, the Discordians, the Gnomes of Zurich and, my all time conspiracy favorites, the Men in Black. Perhaps the best part is that most of the groups' current goals are left quite vague, giving the Gamemaster as much leeway as possible when designing a campaign and establishing the various "Illuminated" goals. This gives the Gamemaster a great deal of freedom and prevents nosey players from learning too much if they buy the *GURPS Illuminati* book. Many of the suggested game scenarios are designed to make no sense whatsoever. In one scenario shadowy forces are simultaneously trying to kill and protect players with no apparent explanation. In another, several conspiracies are desperately fighting to get their hands on a "magguffin," the importance of which remains unknown throughout the scenario. Some players may feel cheated, but the lack of definitive answers only heightens the feelings of paranoia, isolation and insecurity. And that's the kind of stuff that makes conspiratorial role-playing work!

GURPS Illuminati has recently come back into print, after languishing on the backlist for a while. It's worth having and rates a full 10 out of 10 phobias as a solid reference work that will help any *Call of Cthulhu* Keeper add that extra drop of paranoia to their campaign.

Mythos: The Collectable Card Game
designed by Charlie Krank
published by Chaosium, Inc.
reviewed by Brian M. Sammons

With the creation of *Magic: The Gathering* a few years ago, a new gaming industry was born. Like the RPGs of the late '70s and '80s, CCGs (Collectable Card Games) are the latest craze and the hottest thing going today. Also like the RPG boom, the CCG market has been flooded by a sea of titles. No other hobby has grown so fast and has spawned more new games then the CCG industry. You can name most any subject and chances are there is a card game out there based on it. Some of these games are good, but there are many, many more that aren't. It has now come to the point where many RPGs are being translated into card games. So it was only a matter of time before Chaosium released a CCG based on their most popular title, *Call of Cthulhu*.

The game is called *Mythos*, and when I heard of its upcoming release a wave of emotions washed over me: surprise, happiness, anticipation, and...dread. The one thing I feared most of all was that, with this card game, many new people would be introduced to the world of HPL—and what if the game stunk? Many times before people have tried to bring the works of Lovecraft to the masses and failed miserably. So I waited for the game's release and prayed to whatever Old Ones would listen to let it be good. Finely, the game was released and I was one of the lucky ones to get ahold of it. I soon found out *Mythos* was not good, but great!

First, the quality of the cards is top-notch. Chaosium used over forty different artists to illustrate their game. Looking at the cards, you can see that they were given freedom to express their own style and interpretation of the Mythos. The illustrations range from photorealistic pictures to classical watercolor, from computer-generated images to abstract art. Even the feel of the cards is different. Chaosium chose to use the higher-grade poker stock instead of the CCG industry standard. This means the cards will last longer, won't bend as easily, and the better paper stock just gives the game the right kind of "feel" you would expect in a *Cthulhu* game.

As for the way the game plays, it's great. Every starter deck comes with a double-sided, extra-large investigator card; this represents the person you play in the game. The investigator card lists your education, what languages you know, the minimum and maximum number of cards you can retain in your hand between rounds, any special abliities you possess, and (it wouldn't be a Cthulhu game without this) your starting Sanity score. As you go about your adventures, your Sanity score will rise and fall (just like in *Call of Cthulhu*). Your Sanity can not go above 20, and if it ever reaches 0, well...you know what happens: game over.

There are eight other types of cards. Locations are the places you travel to and from. Allies are the

friends you meet during your travels. Artifacts are items that range from normal equipment and weapons to exotic pieces of antiquity (such as the Star Stone of Mnar). Tomes are the evil books of power you might find along your way. Spell cards can be used with Tomes, or by certain Allies or Artifacts. Events are cards to plague your opponent, such as: catastrophes, epidemics, madmen with shotguns, and of course phobias. With Monster cards, you represent an aspect of the mythos that will confront the other players. Finally, perhaps the most important cards of the game are the Adventure cards. Not only are they the way you win the game (by completing the requirements of the adventure), but they also set the mood of the entire game. Unlike other CCGs where you try to kill your opponent, your main goal in *Mythos* is to survive long enough to complete an adventure. To play an Adventure Card, you must have previously played all the required cards listed in its story outline. Once you successfully complete an adventure, you gain the sanity point bonus listed on the card and also receive a number of adventure points, depending on how difficult it was to complete that adventure.

Mythos has rules for two different types of game play: a basic game and a campaign game. The basic game ends when an investigator completes just one Adventure card. In the campaign, an investigator must have played twenty-five points worth of Adventure cards to win. In either game, game play ends when one investigator hits zero Sanity. All players will then tally up their current Sanity score, add to this any points they have received from completed Adventure cards, and the person with the highest score wins.

Game play resembles a CoC game in that it revolves around your investigator traveling from one place to another, meeting interesting people (Allies), and unknowingly stumbling upon the creatures of the mythos. The cards you play during the course of your travels will affect your investigator's Sanity. Playing most Monster and Tome cards will lower your Sanity, for such things should not be known by mortal man. But some Allies, or Locations (like sanitariums), will increase your Sanity.

Perhaps the best thing about *Mythos* is how closely it follows the works that inspired it. All the cards are based upon people, places, and things that you have read about in stories. From the Marsh family of Innsmouth to Miskatonic University, from ghouls to mighty Cthulhu himself, this game has it all.

The only down point to *Mythos* is that it is almost impossible to find the cards at all. Chaosium had a limited print run of these cards and are currently not reprinting any more. This means that if you don't already have a starter deck, your chances of finding one are just slightly better than you stumbling upon the *Necronomicon*. This limited run is the only significant flaw I can find in the game. I think *Mythos* is a great addition to the gaming world, and fans of *Call of Cthulhu* should love it. Therefore, I give *Mythos* 9 out of 10 phobias, subtracting one due only to its scarcity.

The London Guidebook
1920s Roleplaying in the Capital of the World
Chaosium, Inc.
94 pages. $14.95.
reviewed by Allan T. Grohe, Jr.

The second in a series of city guidebooks to be released for *Call of Cthulhu*, *The London Guidebook* presents an overview of the premiere city of the fallen British Empire. The guidebook touches upon each of the city districts, from the Tower of London to Hyde Park, to Soho and the suburbs. The districts fill approximately one-third of the book and include London's subterranean sewers, rivers, and the underground, as well as historical maps and photographs of key locations. The remaining two-thirds examine a variety of topics from 1920s social clubs and entertainment to the history of the city, points of archæological and occult interest, and the daily life of London's citizenry. A scenario, index, and bibliography of London-related historical and *Call of Cthulhu* sources round out the volume.

The London Guidebook offers a solid summary of the city's environs and atmosphere, and its inhabitants' lifestyles. The strongest entries focus on London life in the 1920s: the perspective of the poor, hospital treatment, law and the common attitude toward police, etc. While it contains nothing that couldn't be researched by anyone with time and access to historical materials, the book should prove useful to any Keeper setting scenarios in London, whether to supplement the chapter from *Masks of Nyarlathotep* or to further original and devious machinations. *The London Guidebook* rates a solid 7.5 phobias.

Secret Societies
***Nephilim* sourcebook of Occult Organizations**
by Kenneth Hite
Chaosium, Inc. $16.95
reviewed by Adam Scott Glancy

Secret societies, cults and conspiracies lie at the heart of many *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios. Be they the Brothers of the Yellow Sign, the Esoteric Order of Dagon,

or even members of Delta Green, secret societies and their members are standard set pieces for CoC. In order to add as many "authentic" secret societies to my games, I have made a kind of hobby out of collecting information on secret societies, both real and imagined. *Secret Societies*, a recent sourcebook for Chaosium's *Nephilim* role playing game, will give many *Call of Cthulhu* Keepers a solid introduction to the world of occult conspiracies.

Secret Societies begins with a section entitled "Deep Background," where the author, Kenneth Hite, discusses the major occult traditions in western secret societies. He discusses the Hermetic tradition, Gnosticism, Rosecrucianism and Freemasonry. Hite's basic summation being "Where Hermeticism is a theory, Gnosticism is a theology, Rosecrucianism is a system of thought, Masonry is simply a system of organization." The next section, "The Nature of the Beast," will be of most use to Keepers who have had little experience studying secret societies. This section discusses such topics as the Cell, Lodge and Pyramid organizational structures of conspiratorial societies, how conspiracies and secret societies recruit new members, communicate, and recognize their fellow members, and how they enforce their rules and protect their secrets. While many Keepers may be well-versed in these topics, others will find inspiration and instruction herein.

By far the largest section is the one that covers the various secret societies that are active in the occult world of the *Nephilim* role playing game. Many of the secret societies covered are based on real or imagined ones that have been staples of conspiracy literature for decades. A few secret societies have been created to fill the gaps between the better-known organizations. Conspicuously absent are the Knights Templar, who are important enough in the *Nephilim* universe to rate their own sourcebook (which the author promises is forthcoming). The groups covered include such conspiracy-theory favorites as the Bavarian Illuminati, the Prieure de Sion, and the Nazi Thule Bruderschaft. Orders of knights abound, including the Knights of the Golden Fleece (whose current incarnation seems to be the JASON Society), the Knights of Rhodes (who are the organizational descendants of the Knights Hospitaller, which brought down the Knights Templar), the Teutonic Knights, the Holy Vehm, and the Grail Knights of the Order of St. Sulpice. Secret jungle fortresses, underground Antarctic bases, headquarters disguised as banks and private libraries, and character descriptions of the high and mighty of these organizations (including my personal favorite, Martin Bormann) can all be found within. Since *Secret Societies* is designed for use with the *Nephilim* game system, much of the NPC statistics listed will be reasonably familiar to players of *Call of Cthulhu* and can be easily converted.

CoC Keepers will find plenty of useful material in *Secret Societies*, from its secret society "family tree" showing which group spawned which group to its bibliography which contains many of the classics of occult conspiracy literature (including Von Juntz's *Nameless Cults*). It is also sprinkled with some great quotes from Umberto Eco's occult conspiracy and paranoia classic *Foucault's Pendulum*.

There is one caveat. All the historical secret societies have been redesigned to fit into the role playing world of *Nephilim*. The Holy Vehm and Teutonic knights, for instance, have had "occult" agendas grafted onto their historical goals. Even more historically inaccurate is the addition of goals related to either helping, exploiting or destroying the magical beings known as Nephilim, around whom the world of *Nephilim* revolves. If you know anything about the Holy Vehm, you know flushing out and killing supernatural beings wasn't high on their list of priorities. So if you're looking for a book that describes the factual organization and agendas of historical secret societies, I suggest you try Arkon Daraul's *A History of Secret Societies* or Norman Mackenzie's *Secret Societies*. Both books appear in *Secret Societies*' bibliography and both give a far more historically-loyal examination of many of the groups covered by Kenneth Hite.

Secret Societies rates 7 out of 10 phobias. 8 out of 10 if you don't know the first thing about conspiratorial groups and want a great bibliography to get you started tracking down the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*.

The End
Biblical Apocalypse RPG
Scapegoat Games. 183 pages. $20.00
reviewed by Allan T. Grohe, Jr.

If you attended Gen Con in 1996, you might have seen people walking the convention grounds wearing placards that declared "The End is Near." You might have thought that they were religious fundamentalists, protesting the den of scum and villainy that is the world's largest RPG convention. You would have been wrong.

The placards advertised Scapegoat Games' premiere product, *The End*, a RPG of "theological horror" set on earth after the Christian Apocalypse, written by Joseph Donka and released earlier this year. Like *Rapture: The Second Coming*, *The End* capitalizes on the public's looming millennial fever; however,

unlike *Rapture*, *The End* succeeds in creating a viable roleplaying environment that exploits the strengths of Christian doctrine, while maintaining a marked originality within the scope of the apocalypse. Whereas *Rapture* occurs during the apocalypse, in *The End*, the meek failed to choose a side during the conflict, and when God Judged humanity, He deemed them unworthy of salvation or damnation, then shut the doors to Hell and Heaven.

The End opens with "Chronicles" (all chapters are named after books of the Bible), a first-hand account of the apocalypse up through game present, which postulates, among other things, that medieval copyists spiced up *The Book of Revelation* and thereby scrambled its truths beyond our ability to recognize them. Following, in "Revelation" and "Kings," Donka presents an America almost 100% depopulated, in which characters must not only contend with the fallout of the apocalypse, but The Blues as well: while the USA may seem like a Wal Mart waiting to be looted, anything not actively in use—including most stores of exotic guns and ammo, nuclear weapons, cars, spare parts, etc.—are very swiftly deteriorating as Mother Nature reclaims them. The background material layers the doom of God's individual rejection of each survivor upon the burden of daily survival for the individual and *homo sapiens* as a whole; quite a heady combination...

System-wise, *The End* is a good first effort, and offers two interesting PC characteristics: Sin, the character's reason for failure to enter Hell or Heaven, a nice twist on the Storyteller Nature/Demeanor concept; and Ennui, measuring lack of social contact, it increases as characters remain away from sizable communities for long timespans. The combat system rather sensibly allows characters with greater skill to declare actions after those who are less skilled. Though it doesn't offer a magic system, Donka promises one in a future supplement (ditto for details on non-USA settings). "Judges," the chapter on GMing, remains tied to the traditional GM/player paradigm and offers simplistic thematic and mood guidelines (elementary school level), while the sample adventure—"Exodus"—follows a somewhat linear storyline.

The End suffers from editing errors, including a plague of incorrect apostorphe usages, a typo on the back cover, a two page layout transposition (pages 105 and 106 should be read in reverse order), no stats for supernatural creatures (though at least angels and servitors of the Four Horsemen still survive on earth), and all NPCs lack Ennui stats. The art is generally good, though it often bears little relation to nearby text. Despite these flaws, *The End* is a good read. A wry sense of humor runs throughout the game, occassionally reminiscent of *Paranoia*. I like *The End*'s approach to apocalypse; Donka's earth is philosophically terrifying (yes, God does exist and wants nothing to do with you, putz), in a manner almost exactly opposite to that of Lovecraft's fiction. The game interested and scared me, two excellent points in its favor. All in all, *The End* rates 7 phobias.

Deadlands: The Weird West
Pinnacle Entertainment Group
224 pages, $25.00
Deadlands: Weird Wailin's
Music by Michael Uhrich
$15.00 on compact disc
reviewed by Allan T. Grohe, Jr.

Deadlands: The Weird West premiered at the 1996 Gen Con with a compact disc soundtrack, GM screen, and t-shirt in tow. It crosses the genres of spaghetti westerns (more inspired by the films *From Dusk 'til Dawn* or *Desperado* than Clint Eastwood) with other-worldly horror (Ambrose Bierce and Clive Barker with a dash of Lovecraft), to which Pinnacle adds a touch of pulp-era atmosphere and gadgetry (a la the old *The Wild, Wild West* television show). Set in the United States west of the Mississippi River in the year 1876, *Deadlands* alters historical North America: western California splinters into fjords in the Great Quake of '68, Native American Indians form two independent nations, the Civil War continues into game-present, and The Reckoning occurs. A ritual enacted by a crazed shaman, the Reckoning opens the earth to the Hunting Grounds—a plane not terribly dissimilar to hell. Abominations stalk the countryside terrorizing the locals; magic reenters the world and grants card-carrying hucksters the skills of Merlin; mad scientists with the genius of Thomas Edison craft automatic Gatling pistols and steam-powered wagons. This setting—wild-western action tinged with the bizarre—is both *Deadlands'* most appealing feature and its primary weakness.

The rulebook reads well. Written in a semi-western accented voice, it emulates the speech of the genre while a wry sense of black humor runs throughout the text (perhaps poking fun at its own idiom and the genre in general, similar to *Paranoia*). The skill list includes Fightin' and Shootin' (many '-ing' words drop the final 'g'); the combat movement table is entitled "Gitalong Li'l Doggie." The description of the Hindrance "Ferner" [foreigner] reads, "If they can't understand you, they can't help you," while chapter six opens, "Fate is a fickle bitch. Sometimes she smiles

on you, and sometimes she spits the biggest, nastiest thing you've ever seen right on your head." Such humorous asides, combined with more subtle touches, lend *Deadlands* both its sense of humor and the weirdness that underlies it.

Character types include the standard western gunfighter, Pinkerton Detectives and Texas Rangers (both of whom fight the supernatural in the service of the North and the South, and serve as *de facto* CIA-types), The Harrowed (revenants who battle internal demons in addition to those the world throws their way), saloon gals, Indian shamans, nosy reporters, and other western archetypes. The system blends the use of all six classic *AD&D* dice with common playing cards (used for the magic system and the action deck in combat). To use magic, hucksters must draw a poker hand (two pair, etc.) able to power the desired hex; the hexes themselves fail to live up to the originality of the system, though. *Deadlands* also uses poker chips as counters that represent a character's ability to sway Fate in his favor; white, red, and blue chips carry correspondingly more punch when used to alter die rolls or prevent damage. The cards and chips add to the western feel of the game, and they double nicely as props also.

The interior black-and-white art in *Deadlands* is often flat (literally lacking perspective), reminiscent of bad comic book art, and, in general, is uninspiring; the color art fares somewhat better (Brom's cover works well). The typeface used for headers can be difficult to read (especially the letter N when following an I, as the two blend into one another). Deadlands lacks an index, and the text is rife with editing mistakes; most are minor typos, though the substitution of "Cognition" for "Knowledge" under the page 18 section "Mixing Aptitudes" remains the worst offender.

The game's focus on the Weird West, while it moves *Deadlands* a few steps closer to the pulp genre, strands it, too: the game isn't quite horror, isn't quite action-adventure, but a somewhat odd amalgam of the two. At home in neither genre, *Deadlands* falls in the cracks between the two. While it's a good beer-and-pretzels game and I enjoyed it, I don't see that it holds much potential for long-term play (its best value would seem to lie in one-shots). All in all, *Deadlands* rates 6.5 phobias.

Deadlands: Weird Wailin's similarly fails to clearly define itself. However, whereas in *Deadlands'* core rules I see that as a problem, the music of this soundtrack album spans the breadth of the west, a bridging not quite pulled off in the game. "Lost Souls" and "Dead Man's Waltz" fill the background well with card shufflings and violins, while the more active "Ghost Train" recalls later-Tangerine Dream's *Hyperborea*. "The Haunted Saloon," however, only reminded me of shooting galleries on boardwalks at the shore, with their hurty-gurty man music. "The Weird West" is most traditionally derived from the western music, and would make good travelling music. "The Reckoning" closes the disc on a forlorn, perhaps ominous, note. While the album doesn't offer a truly haunted atmosphere and fails to either thrill me as music or to evoke chills, it remains decent background music and complements the game well, especially for those adventures more focused on the western schtick rather than the horrific aspects. *Weird Wailin's* rates 6 phobias.

Hidden Invasion
Alien conspiracy role playing game
by Paul Arden Lidberg
Nightshift Games, $19.95
reviewed by Adam Scott Glancy

Paul A. Lidberg's *Hidden Invasion* arrives fresh on the heels of the mainstream success of Fox Television's *The X-Files*, although it was apparently in production long before *The X-Files* was aired. Like *The X-Files*, *Hidden Invasion* presents players with a role playing universe taken straight from the pages of UFO conspiracy literature. The aliens from Zeta Reticula, known colloquially as the "Greys," are here and they are taking over our world. The Greys have bought out our government with promises of high technology and even greater terrestrial power and influence for those who collaborate. Players in this game are those few who know the truth and have to battle the corrupt elements of the U.S. government, the alien invaders, and a couple of other conspiratorial groups bent on subverting the Constitution, lining their pockets, and keeping the truth from being known.

The background material in *Hidden Invasion* is an excellent overview of the conspiracy theories currently circulating about alien visitations and what the U.S. government knows about it. It covers everything from the 1947 Roswell UFO crash to the present machinations of Majestic-12—the drug-running, alien-collaborating bad guys who secretly run our government. The bibliography is an excellent resource for tracking down UFO and conspiracy-related literature and movies. Special attention is given to the UFO lunatic fringe. Upcoming *Hidden Invasion* sourcebooks like the *Alien Recognition Manual, Vol. 1* and the *Area 51 Technical Briefing* may prove to be even richer sourcebooks for information on UFO-conspiracy theory.

There is one weakness to *Hidden Invasion*'s game universe. *Hidden Invasion* is populated by evil con-

spiracies: some human, some alien, all bent on world domination. Majestic-12 is selling out America to the invaders; the Illuminoids maneuver to restore their Atlantean empire; the Vatican gears up for a new Inquisition; and the Third Reich plots its resurrection from its Antarctic refuge. However, there are a number of anti-conspiracies which fight against the world-girding conspiracies: the Minutemen are the game counterparts to the real-world Militia movement, except here their paranoia is justified; Project Omega works within and without Majestic-12 to defeat the alien invaders; and the Donaldson Corporation's CEO (who may be modeled on Ross Perot) works to break the grip on the U.S. government held by the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations and Majestic-12. While it's fine for the bad guys to have a well-organized conspiracy, allowing the players to have access to a benevolent conspiracy breaks the atmosphere of isolation and paranoia that are essential for Lovecraftian horror. It's just a little too *James Bond*-ish for those who love *Call of Cthulhu*.

Hidden Invasion's biggest weakness is as a stand-alone game system. *Nightshift* games calls their system the *CINEMATIC ADVENTURE System* and it is very reminiscent of White Wolf's *Storyteller* system. The bottom line is that the system is useless for *Call of Cthulhu* Keepers. *Hidden Invasion*'s use for such folk is as a very entertaining role-playing universe which Keepers can mine for inspiration and ideas. As a source of UFO and conspiracy related horror ideas, *Hidden Invasion* rated 6 out of 10 phobias. I'd go as high as 7 phobias if you've never seen *The X-Files* or don't know the first thing about UFO-conspiracy theory.

The Horror Gamer
horror roleplaying magazine
written, edited & published by G. W. Thomas
reviewed by Michael P. Nagel

I have a confession to make. *Call of Cthulhu* does not hold the bulk of my gaming fascination. That spot is reserved for a wargame called *Up Front*, published by the Avalon Hill Game Company. Once I started playing *Up Front*, I became so immersed in the game that I began to crank out new scenarios and analytical articles which I promptly submitted to *The General* (Avalon Hill's house organ). I was soon contacted by that newsletter's editor—who was himself an *Up Front* aficionado—claiming his desire to publish my submissions. How happy I was! So I waited. And waited. And waited. I got tired of waiting. I felt my articles were good enough for immediate publication, but there wasn't really any reasonable periodical to carry them...so I started my own.

Upon receiving and reading through Gary Thomas' *Horror Gamer*—a new magazine dedicated to horror roleplaying games (not necessarily just *Call of Cthulhu*)—I got the strong impression that he was in the same boat that I was. Not finding anyone to publish his ideas, he started his own magazine.

The magazine's format is as a 64-page booklet (16 legal-sized sheets folded and saddle-stitched), similar to the early editions of *The Unspeakable Oath*. On its cover is an embossed Elder Sign, which may have been included not so much for aesthetics but as a clever device to keep people from creating bogus copies (if it's got an Elder Sign, it's a *Horror Gamer* original!). Throughout the magazine are several illustrations which are quite nice, in particular those of Roddy Williams who did the cover.

Now we come to the contents.

In his editorial, Gary mentions that "the traditional, non-Mythos monsters have always played second fiddle." Herein lays the focus of *The Horror Gamer*: attempting to expand beyond *Call of Cthulhu*'s Lovecraftian boundaries. (Gary must have written the editorial before the release of *Coming Full Circle*.) The attempt is worthwhile. Several of the larger articles deal with such mundane topics as Lovecraft contemporary pulp authors, fictional vampire-hunters, Stonehenge, and man-eating plants (but no Triffids...oh, well). These articles are fairly well-written, but don't expect any earth-shattering revelations as all are light treatments.

For obvious reasons, I can't give out any specific details about the scenarios included in the magazine, but can say that the strategy taken for scenario presentation shows some long-term promise. *The Horror Gamer* offers three types of scenarios: Tales of Terror (just like Steve Hatherley's as found within TUO), Mini-Investigations, and Campaign Investigations. Mini-Investigations are a step up from Tales of Terror in that they provide a more detailed situation and atmosphere, but still require a considerable amount of effort on the part of referee. Of the two provided in the first issue—"Certain Houses" and "The Steinfeld Horror"—the latter holds a lot of promise and the former is a perfect example of what not to put into a scenario (actually, August Derleth or Lin Carter would be proud). The Campaign Investigation and its accompanying article on "The Children of the Night" shows Thomas' interest in the works of Robert E. Howard. The scenario is the epitome of the magazine itself in that it holds a lot of promise but does not deliver. With some effort on the part of the referee, this could be an excellent scenario—particularly if you're into Serpentmen, which I am!

It's very difficult to abstain from drawing parallels between *The Horror Gamer* and *The Unspeakable Oath* in both format and content. If, however, Gary can stick to his initial premise in presenting non-Mythos—or at least very obscure Mythos—content, *The Horror Gamer* can well become an excellent companion to TUO instead of a competitor. Although I feel that the first issue has fallen short content-wise, I know—from the point of view of a small magazine editor—that it will get better.

5 phobias out of 10 for *The Horror Gamer*, but with the promise of some serious SAN loss to come! ($8 from G.W. Thomas, 417 Claxton Crescent, Prince George, BC V2M 6B8)

Metropolis Sourcebook
Reference for the Kult RPG
Metropolis, Ltd. 176 pages. $19.95
reviewed by Allan T. Grohe, Jr.

Since the release of *Taroticum*, the quality of *Kult* support products has steadily declined (though the card game is enjoyable). The *Metropolis Sourcebook*, released at Gen Con last year, has not countered this trend. This book details the ur-city, Metropolis (a melange of Moorcock's Tanelorn, Lovecraft's R'lyeh, and Zelazny's Courts of Chaos): its means of entrance and exit, environs, inhabitants. A setting inspired by madness, the Original City should evoke terror and recognition, mystery and passion in those characters that find themselves within its confines; instead, the material offered remains blandly violent, all too linear in execution, and limited in scope. While individual aspects of the city manage to capture the outre character of Metropolis with flair (particularly in "Places and Incidents"), overall they come across as 1975 dungeon-bashing expedition keys, rather than as opportunities for roleplaying or as aspects of a greater whole that resists definition. The *Metropolis Sourcebook* fails to bridge the gap between inspiration and expression, and in the process the visionary nature of Metropolis crumbles.

In addition, the *Metropolis Sourcebook* suffers from a multitude of editing errors that range from the back cover that states "In order to be able to play *Legions of Darkness*, you must have access to the role playing game *Kult*," to typo and atrocious grammar. Though the art and presentation of the text remain excellent—an aspect of the *Kult* line that has not declined since its appearance—the supplement seems cobbled together, at best (and even reprints material from *Taroticum* in an appendix). A disappointment, the *Metropolis Sourcebook* rates 5 phobias.

The University Guidebook: Miskatonic University
A setting for *Call of Cthulhu*
by Sandy Antunes,
with art by Earl Geier and Paul P. Hansen
Chaosium, Inc. $12. 95
reviewed by James E. Holloway

One of Lovecraft's most important recurrent settings is Miskatonic University, a staid old New England school with blasphemous knowledge in its library and an unfortunately-inquisitive faculty and student body. This fictitious seat of learning was featured in such classic tales as "The Dunwich Horror" and *At the Mountains of Madness*. In *Arkham Unveiled* a CoC-based setting for the University was detailed, with characters and events from Lovecraft's works. Now the University has a book all its own.

Unfortunately, this book reads more like a guide to any average East Coast university with Mythos fragments than any real interpretation of Lovecraft's writing. A brief list of events related to the University in Lovecraft's stories is included, as is the old librarian Henry Armitage, but few of the other characters are authentic, and there are some clear inaccuracies in the library holdings list, particularly regarding the nature of the *Celaeno Fragments*.

The book includes guest appearances by such Arkham Country characters as Joe Potrello (although the Joe in this book and the Joe in *Arkham Unveiled* are significantly different), but there is no real indication that this book takes place in Lovecraft Country. In addition, the Mythos additions border on the silly: I sincerely doubt that if the entire freshman class were killed, the University's response would be to expel those slackers and admit everybody on the wait list. Parts of this book are told with tongue in cheek, but parts of it, like the notion of tunnels connecting MU buildings and being regularly used by students, are simply nuts.

Strange to say, though, the book has a considerable deal of merit. The sections on life in the University are very well-written and -researched, and many of the Sinister Seeds are very good. In fact, this book would serve well as a guide to any college-based campaign, not just a Miskatonic one. If the Keeper is prepared to excise some silly Mythos intrusion (the place is plumb *littered* with plot hooks), the book can be a useful companion for University life, and would probably not make such a bad campaign setting.

Rating: 4 phobias, but increase this to 8 phobias if you are interested in running a campaign in which the investigators are MU students and faculty (oh, and the art's good too).

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

by Pamela Varner

Nobody much likes to talk about Gran'pa. 'Specially now that he's gone. I tried to ask my Mom and Dad where he went to, but they never really would answer me. My Uncle Thomas tried to talk to me about him once, but I guess I really didn't understand. Now it's been one year to the day since he disappeared, and we're putting his bodiless casket into the ground.

As me and my Dad drove down the twisty little road to Gran'pa's house the day after the funeral, I began to feel a little sad. We were going there to clean out his things and "finish it all up," as my Dad said. All that was left of my Gran'pa was his stuff, and now that was all going away too. I forgot all about being sad when we got to his house though. It was about the biggest, oldest, coolest house I'd ever seen, with more twisty staircases and funny little rooms than I'd ever imagined could be under one roof. Gran'pa's yard was huge too. It wasn't a yard, it was a wilderness!

I played in the rooms for hours, and it was getting to be a little late when Dad finally got around to opening up the attic. Attics always seem exciting, so I followed him up the stairs. It was filled with bags of old clothes, boxes of books, and a lot of dust. But I guess it was that weird-looking old chest that really caught my attention. It must have caught Dad's attention too, 'cause he was busy playing with the lock before I was hardly even up the steps. The chest was big and heavy looking, like it had to contain something really important like jewels or bags of gold or something. My Dad had a big ring of keys that went to all the doors of the house, but he just couldn't find one that fit the chest. He tried for quite a while, but finally gave up and went back downstairs.

I thought it was kinda strange that Dad had such trouble unlocking the chest, 'cause when I snuck back up into the attic a little later it sure wasn't locked then. It just opened right up. But when I peered down into the chest I didn't see any gold or jewels or anything. Just an old folded-up piece of paper. I took it out and carefully unfolded it, trying not to crumble too many pieces off. At first I didn't know what to think, but after I studied the paper for a little while I started to think that maybe it was treasure after all. It was a map.

The sun was just starting to set when I went outside to look for Gran'pa's treasure. Even though I hadn't been to his house but one time before, when I was a little baby, the map seemed easy to follow. I knew just where the old bridge was that crossed the river that flows through the property. As I crossed the bridge I felt the map flutter from my fingers. It wasn't necessary since I knew exactly where the little ivy-covered gate was in the gardens beyond the sunset river.

The gate creaked open. I hadn't seen *Kurath'Na* in years. Or was it yesterday? I gazed at the City of Mists that lay sleeping in the distance. My destination is clear. My heart is light. We shall walk together once again, he and I.

TCC 4/15

PLOTTING THE DOWNFALL OF HUMANITY SINCE 1990

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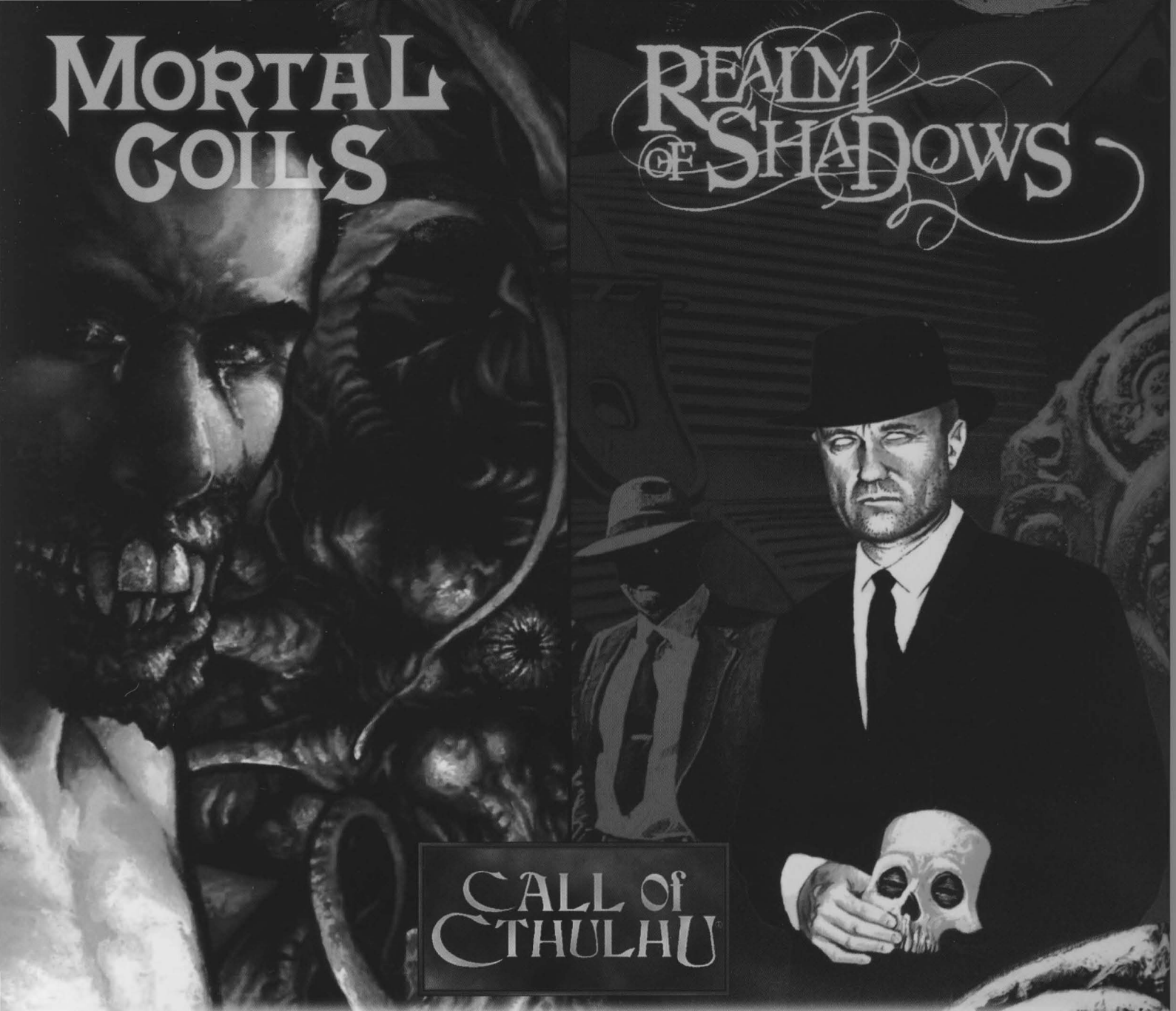

THE NEW FACES OF FEAR

Want to see something **really** scary? We've got two new *Call of Cthulhu* books coming out this summer, ready to provoke, thrill, and inspire you and your players. Intelligently written, stunningly illustrated, and beautifully designed, these are two books you're not going to want to miss. *The Realm of Shadows,* coming in June, is a masterful new 1940s campaign written by John H. Crowe III—the author of *Walker in the Wastes* and *Coming Full Circle*—and illustrated cover-to-cover by artist Blair Reynolds. *Mortal Coils,* coming late this summer, is a new anthology of chilling adventures by some of the most inventive writers around. Look close—the face of fear might be your own.

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